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THE GRAPHIC  
EXTRAS 1914

THE FIRST PHASE  
OF THE GREAT WAR





TO VIVI  
AMORALIA



LOUVAIN  
A.D. 1914

*Specially drawn for the "Graphic Extra" by W. Hatherell, R.I.*

THE GRAPHIC EXTRAS

# THE FIRST PHASE OF THE GREAT WAR

BY

A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE

WITH NEARLY TWO HUNDRED ILLUS-  
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## CONTENTS

|  | PAGES   |
|--|---------|
| I<br>THE DECLARATION OF WAR: HOW THE NATIONS<br>RECEIVED THE NEWS AND PREPARED FOR THE<br>CONFLICT . . . . . | 17-28   |
| II<br>ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT . . . . .  | 65-76   |
| III<br>BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD . . . . .   | 93-104  |
| IV<br>THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE . . . . .  | 129-148 |
| V<br>THE FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND THE RETIREMENT<br>ON PARIS . . . . .  | 181-204 |



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

### PHOTOGRAVURE

|                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| LOUVAIN, A.D. 1914 . . . . . | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
|------------------------------|---------------------|

#### COLOUR

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| ON GUARD . . . . .   | 22   |
| PRAYING FOR VICTORY AT THE ALEXANDER COLUMN .  | 46   |
| FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, WHO COMMANDS<br>OUR ARMY IN FRANCE, ARRIVING AT THE MINISTRY<br>OF WAR, PARIS . . . . . | 76   |
| WATCH AND WARD AT ENGLAND'S DANGER-POINT .   | 98   |
| THE FIGHT IN THE HELIGOLAND BIGHT: THE LIGHT<br>CRUISER SQUADRON SIGHTING THE ENEMY . . . .                            | 104  |
| IN THE FIRING LINE . . . . .   | 180  |
| THE CHARGE OF THE 9TH LANCERS ON THE GERMAN GUNS   | 192  |
| THE MASTERY OF THE AIR . . . . .   | 204  |

#### BLACK AND WHITE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| H.M. KING GEORGE V. OF ENGLAND . . . .                          | 29 |
| H.M. THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS II. OF RUSSIA . .                     | 29 |
| M. RAYMOND POINCARÉ . . . . .                                   | 29 |
| THE SHADOW OF WAR . . . . .                                     | 31 |
| THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR EDWARD GREY . .                        | 32 |
| THE SCENE IN THE PRECINCTS OF THE HOUSE OF<br>COMMONS . . . . . | 33 |

THE MILITARY  
ADVENTURE

ILLUSTRATIONS

|  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| WAITING FOR WAR . . . . .  | 34   |
| HOW THE FRENCH CHAMBER RECEIVED THE NEWS OF<br>ENGLAND'S AID . . . . .   | 35   |
| THE CZAR OF RUSSIA BEARING A SACRED IKON AND<br>BLESSING HIS TROOPS ON THE MARCH TOWARDS<br>EAST PRUSSIA . . . . .                   | 36   |
| SERVIAN SOLDIER PRAYING BEFORE A SACRED IKON   | 37   |
| PRINCE LICHNOWSKY . . . . .  | 38   |
| FIELD-MARSHAL EARL KITCHENER, K.C.B. . . . .   | 39   |
| FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, K.C.B. . . . .  | 39   |
| THE 6TH DRAGOON GUARDS (THE CARABINIERS) JOINING<br>THEIR REGIMENT AT CANTERBURY . . . . .   | 40   |
| ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY AT NINE ELMS PREPARING TO<br>ENTRAIN WITH THEIR 18½-POUNDER FIELD GUNS .                                       | 40   |
| NAVAL RESERVES ON THE WAY TO THEIR SHIPS . . . . .   | 40   |
| COMMANDERING HORSES . . . . .  | 41   |
| MARINES LEAVE WATERLOO . . . . .   | 41   |
| SWEARING-IN RECRUITS . . . . .   | 42   |
| NEW RECRUITS . . . . .   | 42   |
| LORD KITCHENER LEAVING THE WAR OFFICE TO ATTEND<br>HIS FIRST CABINET MEETING AFTER HE WAS AP-<br>POINTED SECRETARY FOR WAR . . . . . | 43   |
| MOUNTED SENTRY CHALLENGING A MOTOR CYCLIST ON<br>AN ENGLISH COUNTRY ROAD . . . . .   | 44   |
| GUARDING THE MAIN ROADS ROUND PARIS . . . . .  | 45   |
| MOBILISING THE CIVIL GUARD AT ANTWERP . . . . .  | 46   |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| PATROLLING THE PARIS BOULEVARDS AT NIGHT . . . . .  | 46   |
| SHARPENING THE FRENCH SWORD OF VENGEANCE . . . . .  | 47   |
| PARIS ON THE ALERT . . . . .  | 48   |
| BOY SCOUTS CONVOYING A FORAGE WAGON AT NANCY . . . . .  | 49   |
| COLLECTING REGISTERED HORSES FOR THE WAR . . . . .  | 50   |
| EXAMINING SUSPECTS IN PARIS . . . . .   | 51   |
| THE EMPERORS OF AUSTRIA AND GERMANY . . . . .   | 52   |
| GREAT WAR DEMONSTRATION HELD IN BERLIN ON AUGUST<br>2, 1914 . . . . .   | 53   |
| THE CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY IN THE FIELD . . . . .  | 54   |
| THE GERMAN EXODUS FROM LONDON ON THE EVE OF<br>WAR . . . . .  | 55   |
| ONE OF THE ARMED WATCHERS WHO, IN CONJUNCTION<br>WITH THE NAVAL SEARCHLIGHTS, KEEP GUARD ALONG<br>THE COAST . . . . .   | 56   |
| WATCHING FOR HOSTILE AIRSHIPS ON THE FRENCH<br>FRONTIER . . . . .   | 57   |
| THE RUE DE RIVOLI AT NIGHT . . . . .  | 58   |
| PARIS IN WAR TIME . . . . .   | 58   |
| " DÉPART RÉGULIER " . . . . .   | 59   |
| " DÉPART POPULAIRE " . . . . .  | 59   |
| AUSTRIAN RESERVES, WITH LUGGAGE, ON THEIR WAY TO<br>JOIN THE COLOURS WHEN AUSTRIA WAS CONCEN-<br>TRATING ON THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER, LEAVING ONLY<br>A SMALL FORCE TO DEAL WITH SERVIA . . . . . | 60   |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| GERMAN TROOPS UNLOADING BAGGAGE AND AMMUNITION<br>NEAR THE FRENCH FRONTIER, AFTER THE SEIZURE<br>OF LUXEMBURG . . . . . | 60   |
| EVERY SON OF FRANCE IS AT HIS POST . . . . .  | 61   |
| TO BERLIN . . . . .   | 62   |
| NO THOROUGHFARE ! . . . . .   | 63   |
| FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH ARRIVING AT<br>BOULOGNE . . . . .   | 77   |
| THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS MARCHING THROUGH THE<br>THIRTEENTH-CENTURY PORTE DES DUNES AT<br>BOULOGNE . . . . .            | 78   |
| BRITISH TROOPS AT BOULOGNE . . . . .  | 79   |
| ARMY SERVICE WAGONS DRIVING THROUGH BOULOGNE<br>AMID THE FRANTIC ACCLAMATION OF THE FRENCH<br>PEOPLE . . . . .          | 80   |
| THE ENGLISH CAMP OUTSIDE BOULOGNE . . . . .   | 81   |
| FRENCH INFANTRY WAITING FOR THEIR TRAIN AT THE<br>GARE DE LYON, PARIS . . . . .   | 82   |
| A BRITISH INFANTRYMAN IN FRANCE ENJOYING AN HOUR<br>OFF DUTY . . . . .  | 83   |
| FRENCH TROOPS ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT. "VIVE<br>LE GÉNIE ! VIVE LES DRAGONS !" . . . . .                                | 84   |
| WOMEN AT WORK IN THE FIELDS IN FRANCE, ALL ABLE-<br>BODIED MEN HAVING GONE TO THE FRONT . . . . .                       | 85   |
| THE GENEROUS FRENCH GIVING OF THEIR BEST TO<br>BRITISH TROOPS . . . . .   | 86   |
| THE ROAD TO ALSACE . . . . .  | 87   |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| BRITISH SOLDIERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE FRONT,<br>HALTING FOR REFRESHMENTS AT A VILLAGE IN<br>NORMANDY . . . . . | 88   |
| TO THE FIRING LINE . . . . .  | 89   |
| THE ENTENTE CORDIALE AT ROUEN . . . . .   | 90   |
| PRISONERS OF WAR AT VERSAILLES . . . . .  | 91   |
| ENGLISH OFFICERS ENJOYING A HASTY MEAL WITH AN<br>INTERPRETER OF THE FRENCH MILITARY STAFF . . .              | 92   |
| THE EMPIRE'S WATCH-DOGS . . . . .   | 105  |
| THE BRITISH FLEET READY FOR SEA . . . . .   | 106  |
| "LIGHTS ARE BURNING BRIGHT. ALL'S WELL!" . . .  | 107  |
| ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELLIFFE, K.C.B. . . . .   | 108  |
| REAR-ADMIRAL W. E. MADDEN . . . . .   | 108  |
| VICE-ADMIRAL SIR DAVID BEATTY . . . . .   | 108  |
| REAR-ADMIRAL A. G. MOORE . . . . .  | 109  |
| COMMANDER W. E. GOODENOUGH . . . . .  | 109  |
| REAR-ADMIRAL A. H. CHRISTIAN . . . . .  | 109  |
| COMMODORE R. Y. TYRWHITT . . . . .  | 109  |
| THE NERVE-CENTRE OF THE NAVY . . . . .  | 110  |
| HURRYING ON THE COMPLETION OF THE "KÖNIG," A<br>GERMAN DREADNOUGHT AT WILHELMSHAVEN . . .                     | 111  |
| H.M.S. "BIRMINGHAM" . . . . .   | 112  |
| COMMANDER GOODENOUGH . . . . .  | 112  |
| H.M.S. "KENNET" CHASING A GERMAN TORPEDO BOAT<br>OFF TSINGTAU . . . . .                                       | 113  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| MINE-SWEEPING AT SEA . . . . .  | 114  |
| THE HEAVIEST LOSS IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE .   | 115  |
| BRITISH TRANSPORT CARRYING TROOPS ACROSS TO<br>FRANCE . . . . .                           | 116  |
| GERMANY'S MENACE TO NEUTRALS . . . . .  | 117  |
| DESTROYED BY A GERMAN SUBMARINE . . . . .   | 118  |
| ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR CONTRABAND . . . . .  | 119  |
| FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE . . . . .   | 120  |
| MURDEROUS SNARES FOR NEUTRAL SHIPPING . . . . .   | 122  |
| THE ACTION OFF HELIGOLAND . . . . .   | 123  |
| SAVED BY A SUBMARINE . . . . .  | 124  |
| ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ . . . . .   | 125  |
| VICE-ADMIRAL INGENOHL . . . . .   | 125  |
| AFTER THE BATTLE . . . . .  | 126  |
| THE BRITISH NAVY . . . . .  | 127  |
| THE GERMAN FLEET SAILS FROM HELIGOLAND . . . . .  | 128  |
| H.M. ALBERT, KING OF BELGIUM . . . . .  | 149  |
| THE GERMAN ADVANCE GUARD INVADING BELGIAN<br>TERRITORY AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, 1914 . | 151  |
| THE BATTLEFIELDS OF BELGIUM . . . . .   | 152  |
| THE FORTS AT LIÉGE THAT KEPT THE WAR LORD'S<br>HOSTS AT BAY . . . . .                     | 153  |
| THE DISAPPEARING TURRET INTRODUCED BY GENERAL<br>BRIALMONT . . . . .                      | 153  |
| THE INVADING GERMANS IN A BELGIAN VILLAGE . . . . .                                       | 154  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| BELGIAN LANCERS CHARGING UHLANS . . . . .   | 155  |
| LIÉGE ("KNIGHT OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR") AS<br>IT APPEARS IN THE HANDS OF THE INVADER . . . . . | 156  |
| THE FIRST BATTLE IN BELGIUM . . . . .   | 157  |
| BRUSSELS DURING THE FIGHTING AT LIÉGE . . . . .   | 158  |
| THE GERMAN ARMY MAKING ITS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO<br>BRUSSELS . . . . .                           | 159  |
| FLEEING BEFORE THE PRUSSIANS . . . . .  | 160  |
| THE FIELD OF WATERLOO . . . . .   | 160  |
| THE BRIDGE OF HUY . . . . .   | 161  |
| FIELD-MARSHAL BARON VON DER GOLTZ . . . . .   | 162  |
| M. MAX . . . . .  | 162  |
| GENERAL F. VON EMMICH . . . . .   | 162  |
| GENERAL LEMAN . . . . .   | 162  |
| MINISTERING ANGELS . . . . .  | 163  |
| GERMAN OFFICERS HOLDING A WAR COUNCIL IN THE<br>CHAUSÉE DE LOUVAIN . . . . .                    | 164  |
| BRUSSELS IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY . . . . .  | 164  |
| BELGIAN CARABINIERS DEFENDING THE ROUTE . . . . .   | 165  |
| BRUSSELS CIVIC GUARD WITH MACHINE GUNS DRAWN<br>BY DOG TEAMS, DURING THE RETREAT . . . . .      | 165  |
| TO CHECK THE INVADER, PEASANT MEN AND WOMEN<br>MAKING TRENCHES . . . . .                        | 166  |
| GERMAN SOLDIERS DRIVING THE PEASANTS OUT OF A<br>BELGIAN VILLAGE . . . . .                      | 167  |
| THE GERMAN BOMBARDMENT OF NAMUR . . . . .   | 168  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE CITADEL OF NAMUR, WHICH WAS CAPTURED BY<br>THE GERMANS ON AUGUST 22 . . . . .           | 169  |
| CHARLEROI AFTER ITS CAPTURE AND DESTRUCTION . .   | 170  |
| THE RUINS OF THE CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME AT DINANT   | 171  |
| THE TRIUMPHANT EAGLE . . . . .  | 172  |
| THE ACTION AT TIRLEMONT . . . . .   | 173  |
| GERMANY'S CRIME AGAINST POSTERITY . . . . .   | 175  |
| THE DEFENCE OF ANTWERP AND THE OFFENCE OF THE<br>ZEPPELIN . . . . .                         | 176  |
| A FORCE OF BRITISH MARINES LANDING FOR THE DEFENCE<br>OF OSTEND . . . . .                   | 177  |
| "CREATE EXAMPLES WHICH BY THEIR FRIGHTFULNESS<br>WILL BE A WARNING TO THE WHOLE COUNTRY " . | 178  |
| THE KING OF THE BELGIANS IN THE FIELD . . . . .   | 179  |
| FLOODING THE GERMANS OUT . . . . .  | 180  |
| IN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY . . . . .   | 205  |
| UNDAUNTED BY SHOT AND SHELL: DRIVER OF THE<br>R.F.A. SAVING HIS GUN . . . . .               | 206  |
| TOURNAI . . . . .   | 207  |
| MONS BELFRY . . . . .   | 207  |
| THE BRITISH STAND AT MONS . . . . .   | 208  |
| BRINGING DOWN THE GERMAN EAGLE . . . . .  | 209  |
| BATTLE OF CAMBRAI—LE CATEAU . . . . .   | 210  |
| THE TURCOS CHARGING AT CHARLEROI . . . . .  | 211  |
| THE RETIREMENT FROM CHARLEROI . . . . .   | 212  |
| FACING THE FOE TO THE LAST . . . . .  | 213  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| GENERAL SIR H. SMITH-DORRIEN . . . . .  | 214  |
| GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG . . . . .  | 214  |
| BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. DE B. DE LISLE . . . . .                                 | 214  |
| LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR DAVID HENDERSON . . . . .                              | 214  |
| GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON . . . . .  | 215  |
| MAJOR-GENERAL SIR PHILIP CHETWODE . . . . .                                   | 215  |
| MAJOR-GENERAL EDMUND ALLENBY . . . . .  | 215  |
| MAJOR-GENERAL SIR A. MURRAY . . . . .   | 215  |
| GENERAL JOFFRE . . . . .  | 216  |
| GENERAL PAU . . . . .   | 216  |
| GENERAL D'AMADE . . . . .   | 216  |
| THE BRITISH STAND AT MONS . . . . .   | 218  |
| CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY . . . . .   | 221  |
| PRINCE RUPERT OF BAVARIA . . . . .  | 221  |
| COUNT VON MOLTKE . . . . .  | 222  |
| GENERAL VON KLUCK . . . . .   | 222  |
| PRINCE VON BÜLOW . . . . .  | 222  |
| GENERAL VON HANSEN . . . . .  | 222  |
| ON THE FRONT AT DINARD . . . . .  | 223  |
| LIKE A FLOCK OF CROWS . . . . .   | 224  |
| THE GERMANS AT ORCHIES . . . . .  | 225  |
| AFTER THE BATTLE . . . . .  | 226  |
| WATCHING THE ONCOMING GERMANS FROM A COIGN OF<br>VANTAGE AT ORCHIES . . . . . | 227  |

## ILLUSTRATIONS

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| THE EXODUS FROM PARIS . . . . .   | 228  |
| REFUGEES LEAVING PARIS BY THE LAST TRAIN FROM<br>THE GARE DU NORD . . . . .   | 229  |
| THE TURN OF THE TIDE : FRENCH PURSUING GERMANS<br>AT MEAUX . . . . .  | 230  |
| BATTLE OF MEAUX . . . . .   | 231  |
| ON THE FRONTIER . . . . .   | 232  |
| RECEIVING THE WOUNDED IN PARIS . . . . .  | 233  |
| A WOUNDED BRITISH OFFICER IN FRANCE . . . . .   | 234  |
| TREES AS BARRICADES . . . . .   | 235  |
| BATTLING IN THE BLUE . . . . .  | 236  |
| BOLTS FROM THE BLUE . . . . .   | 237  |
| ON THE MEUSE . . . . .  | 238  |
| MÉZIÈRES, THE CHIEF TOWN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE<br>ARDENNES, AND A GREAT TRAINING CENTRE FOR THE<br>FRENCH ARMY . . . . . | 239  |
| VERDUN, PORT CHÂTEL . . . . .   | 239  |
| THE RUINED RAILWAY AND TELEGRAPH WIRES AT CRÉPY   | 240  |
| HOW THE FRENCH CROSSED A RUINED BRIDGE SPANNING<br>THE RIVER NONETTE AT CHANTILLY . . . . .                                 | 241  |
| THE FRENCH 75-M. GUN IN ACTION . . . . .  | 242  |
| A LETTER FROM THE FIRING LINE . . . . .   | 243  |
| THE PRICE OF VICTORY . . . . .  | 244  |

# I

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR ; HOW THE NATIONS RECEIVED THE NEWS AND PREPARED FOR THE CONFLICT

THE famous Marshal von Moltke, the uncle of the Von Moltke of to-day, not long before his death ventured upon a prediction that the next great European war would "come with all the suddenness of a summer storm." Bismarck had expressed the same opinion in another way when he said that there was always a lot of gunpowder lying about in Europe and a spark might cause an explosion.

Ever since the war between France and Germany in 1870-71 there had been a steady growth in the armaments of the Continental Powers. The armed peace of Europe at last entailed an expenditure greater than the cost of war itself had been in earlier times when campaigns were conducted by relatively small armies. Again and again it was said that the day would come when the very strain of maintaining this constant readiness for war on a gigantic scale by "nations in arms" would lead to an outbreak of hostilities, one or other of the great military Powers seeking a conflict in the hope of such a sweeping victory as would enable it to reduce its armaments after striking an effective blow.

But on the other hand, as year after year went by, crisis after crisis was solved by diplomatic efforts and more than one war in Eastern Europe was successfully localised, public opinion began to grow optimistic. It was felt that a war involving the greater part of Europe was something too horrible ever to become an accomplished fact. M. Bloch of Warsaw attempted to prove that under modern conditions a war between great Powers had become practically impossible. Mr. Norman Angell proved almost to demonstration that under existing conditions of trade and finance war

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

was becoming impossible because even the victor would lose more by it than he could possibly gain. The establishment of the Hague Tribunal, the conclusion of various arbitration treaties, and the settlement of more than one dispute between nations by arbitration encouraged the hope that future quarrels would be settled by peaceful means.

But at the same time, there were several permanent danger points. Morocco was one. The Balkan peninsula was another. The Powers had grouped themselves for mutual support in the event of the clash of interests becoming acute in any direction. The first of these groupings, the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy, was represented as a league of peace to prevent any disturbance of the existing European situation. There were times when it seemed quite likely that England would join this league of the Central European Powers. During long years of rivalry in Africa and in the East, during which France and England were twice on the verge of war, France was regarded as our most likely enemy. The French alliance with Russia was formed during this state of things. It was the naval ambition of Germany and German adventures in Morocco that led to our Entente with France, an understanding behind which there was a pledge that in certain contingencies England would give armed support to France.

Thus there was a grouping of the Powers in the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy, and the Triple Entente of England, France, and Russia. But it was supposed by those who took an optimistic view of the situation that this very grouping of possible rivals would facilitate an understanding on any point in dispute. When the Kaiser met the Czar at Port Baltic in 1912, he said that he regarded the division of Europe into these great confederations as the best safeguard against hostilities. Within a few weeks of the war, at the opening of the widened Kiel Canal, he spoke again of peace as assured, and on this occasion he was wearing the uniform of a British admiral, and his flag was flying on one of the great Dreadnoughts which is now cleared for action in the North Sea.

But while these pacific speeches were being made, there was still, to use a Bismarckian phrase, "a lot of gunpowder lying about." For two years there had been a series of wars in the Baltic peninsula. Thanks largely to the diplomacy of England, these conflicts had been successfully localised, notwithstanding the acute rivalry of Austria and Russia in the

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

Near East. But suddenly the spark came which set the gunpowder on fire. On Sunday, June 28th, the Archduke Ferdinand, the heir to the crowns of Austria and Hungary, and his wife, the Countess Chotek, were assassinated in the streets of Serajevo, the capital of Bosnia. Europe was horrified at the crime, for the Archduke was the hope of Austria, and world-wide sympathy had been attracted to him when he refused to have his marriage arranged by a choice made for him among the princely houses of Europe, and had chosen for himself a lady of the Slav race—this very act being typical of both his independent spirit and his hope to bring about a lasting peace between the Austrian Government and its Slav subjects. In Austria and Hungary, rightly or wrongly, it was considered that he had been made a victim of a Servian conspiracy, and that he had been selected for assassination because the success of his policy would bar the way to the Servian hope of extending the kingdom over the Southern Slav lands of Austria. In the Hungarian and Austrian press there was a furious outcry for vengeance upon Belgrade. "We must clear out this nest of Servian plague rats" were the words in which the leading papers of Buda-Pesth called for war. But even then no one expected that the tragedy of Serajevo would lead to a general European conflict or imagined that the pistol shots fired on June 28th would, within a few weeks, find a terrible echo on battlefields where millions would be set in array.

On July 23rd Austria presented a stern ultimatum to Servia charging the Court of Belgrade with organised conspiracy, and insisting on measures of repression to be carried out under the supervision of Austrian officials. Refusal would mean war at the end of forty-eight hours. Even then it was hoped that this new Balkan conflict would be localised like those of the previous two years. There is no need to tell the story of the hurried negotiation, the threats and counter-threats, the deliberate or unwilful misunderstanding amidst which a cloud of war rapidly darkened over Europe. Austria declared Servia's answer to be unsatisfactory, and had broken off relations with Belgrade, and on July 28th followed this step by a declaration of war. Sir Edward Grey had tried to arrange for the meeting of a conference of ambassadors in London. Vienna and Berlin had become wildly excited at the news of a Russian declaration that the Czar would stand by Servia and prevent Austria from destroying its independence under a plea of exacting reparation for the Serajevo

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

tragedy. Crowds in the streets were cheering for war with Russia. Paris, fully conscious of the fact that in virtue of the Dual Alliance the war could not be confined to Eastern Europe, was slower in catching the general fever of excitement. London was strangely calm. The fact was that men refused to believe such a calamity as a general European war was possible.

But London too felt the first agitation of the coming storm when news from the Continent told of the partial mobilisation of the Russian army on July 30th, a decree of general mobilisation on the following day, and a declaration of "the state of war" in Germany, a preliminary measure of mobilisation which gives the military authorities control of all the railways and telegraphs.

There was utter disorganisation on the Stock Exchange. A serious banking crisis was only averted by exceptional measures taken by the Government in concert with the great banks. The fleet, which had just been dismissed for tactical and gunnery exercises after a great review by the King at Portsmouth, had been ordered as a precautionary measure to reassemble at certain stations. Guards had been placed on arsenals and other important points, and the preliminary steps had been taken for the mobilisation of our fleet and army. But all this was done quietly, so as to avoid anything like provocation to Germany. England was waiting, still hopeful for peace, even after the declaration of war by Germany against Russia on August 1st, but ready though reluctant to draw the sword if the terrible necessity arose.

To the last moment Sir Edward Grey worked strenuously for peace. He even endeavoured to make an arrangement by which England, whilst standing aside from the quarrel, would guarantee France from attacks upon its coasts, its trade, and its colonies by the German navy. What actually forced England to intervene was the German invasion of Belgium in defiance of the treaty by which the European Powers had pledged themselves to defend and protect her neutrality. On Tuesday, August 4th, on the news that German troops were moving against Liège, an ultimatum was addressed to Berlin, demanding an assurance that the neutrality of Belgium would be respected; as the reports from the Belgian frontier indicated that this neutrality was on the very point of being violated, the demand had to be peremptory. Germany was given until midnight (Berlin time, equivalent to 11 p.m. in London) to send a satisfactory reply. The German troops

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

had already entered Luxemburg on the Sunday morning, and on the same day Germany had sent an ultimatum to Belgium demanding free passage for her troops through Belgium territory, and offering a friendly understanding if this were conceded. Belgium had rejected the demand and begun to mobilise her army. The Germans were firing on Liège hours before the expiration allowed by the British ultimatum. At 11 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4th, England was at war with Germany, and orders were issued for the mobilisation of the army and the Territorials, the naval reserves being called up two days before.

The peoples of Great Britain, Ireland, and the Empire entered upon the war with an absolute union of heart and spirit which must have come as a surprise to those German politicians who counted on internal divisions weakening the power of Britain. In the historic sitting of the House of Commons at which Sir Edward Grey announced the policy of the Government, Mr. Bonar Law pledged the Opposition to give the utmost support to the Ministry, and Mr. John Redmond declared that Ireland was absolutely with England, that every soldier now in Ireland might be withdrawn, and the people would answer for the preservation of order and the defence of the country. Even those who, up to the last moment, had argued that England might stand aside from the quarrel, now protested that it was the duty of every one to make the utmost sacrifice and secure a victory for our arms. The fact that the war had been declared to uphold the independent neutrality of Belgium and to fulfil a solemn treaty obligation to that effect made it clear to every one that our quarrel was a just one. It was remarkable that there was an almost complete absence of noisy demonstrations. Every one recognised how serious the situation was, and set to work in a serious spirit to prepare for strenuous exertions and the endurance of difficult times. From all the dominions of the Empire and from India there came promises of unfaltering support for the Mother Country. It might be said indeed that there were more open demonstrations of enthusiasm in some far-off cities of the Empire than in its centre. In Canada, when the news of the declaration of the war arrived, the streets of Quebec and Montreal were thronged with cheering crowds far into the night.

The declarations of war between the various Powers involved in the struggle came in quick succession during the following days. When all the combatants were set in the lists

#### THE DECLARATION OF WAR

there were on the one side Germany and Austria-Hungary—for Italy had at the last moment declared her neutrality; and on the other, England, France, Belgium, Russia, Servia, and a little later Japan.

In Russia the conflict had been hailed as a holy war in defence of the freedom of a brother Slav state. The mobilisation of over four millions of men was hailed with enthusiasm by the people, and the Czar's proclamation promising autonomy to Poland and calling upon the Polish people to rally to their kindred Slavs was accepted by most of the Polish leaders as a pledge of the revival of their nationality, thus removing at the outset what many had supposed would be a serious difficulty to Russia. Nor was there less enthusiasm in Austria-Hungary and Germany. All the most reliable evidence goes to show that the Germans regarded the war as a national struggle against the Slav menace to the eastward and the danger from France in the west. Only in the Austrian Empire was there a divided people. There the Slav races reluctantly obeyed the call to arms in this great conflict between the Teuton and the Slav Powers. The result was a very serious difficulty for Austria at the outset of the Galician campaign.

In France there was the same unanimous rally of all parties to the national cause which was witnessed in England. There were no longer Royalists or Republicans, Conservatives or Liberals, all were simply Frenchmen, and of all the countries of the Continent involved in the war France had at the outset to make the most serious sacrifices. For in order to meet on anything like equal terms the more populous German Empire France had at the very beginning to place nearly all her manhood under arms. Old men, women, and children had to reap the abundant harvest. It was with difficulty that enough men were spared to work the railways and keep the necessary factories going. The French army corps are not so completely localised as those of Germany, and the mobilisation therefore entailed much heavier work for the railways, the difficulty being increased by the fact that as Germany had obtained a start with her mobilisation, considerable reinforcements had to be hurried at once to the eastern frontier. England had promised the early support of an expeditionary force of about 150,000 men; with this help France might hope to meet the German attack with fairly equal numbers at the outset. But provision had to be made for the movement of these Allies from the northern ports of France over

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*Painted by Gilbert Holiday*

ON GUARD

20 MARCH  
1940

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

the railways to the points assigned to them in the battle line.

The French Staff had to face the probability that at the outset of the war Germany would bring the greater part of her first-line forces into action on her western frontiers. For twenty years at least German military experts had been discussing the problem of the war on two fronts—the eastern front in the direction of the Vistula against Russia, and the western front in the direction of the Rhine against France ; and as the basis of all calculations it had been assumed that on account of the enormous extent of the Russian Empire and the backward state of the Russian railway system, the mobilisation and concentration of the Czar's armies would lag considerably behind that of the other Powers. The Germans therefore counted upon being able to throw their main force against France on the western front and win a decisive victory before the Russian pressure on the eastern front would become serious. This meant that at the outset France would have to bear the brunt of the battle.

It was estimated that the general mobilisation of the Russian army would bring about four million trained men into the field, but these would only gradually become available. The peace strength of the army was about 1,200,000, and of these about two-thirds were stationed in Europe, their peace stations being mostly westward of Moscow in order to facilitate concentration in the Polish frontier districts. But many of the army corps thus garrisoned in Russia had to draw their reservists from the borders of Asia and the Black Sea coast districts, partly by marching, partly over hundreds of miles of single-track railway lines. In all thirty-seven army corps and twenty-four cavalry divisions were mobilised on the declaration of war and formed into field armies to operate against Eastern Prussia from the Niemen and from Northern Poland, against Posen and Silesia from the region of the Polish fortresses, and against Austria on the Galician frontier in two great masses—one facing southward from Poland, the other moving against Eastern Galicia and Lemberg from Southern Russia.

The defection of Italy and the war with Servia tended seriously to diminish the force that Austria-Hungary could place in the field against Russia. About 350,000 men of the Austro-Hungarian army were already engaged in active hostilities on the Servian border or employed in maintaining order in Bosnia. Another large force had to be kept on the

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

Italian frontier in view of the agitation in Italy for a declaration of war on the side of the Triple Entente. Nevertheless, Austria-Hungary could rapidly concentrate about a million men in Galicia. These were grouped in two armies, one of which was to act on the defensive in the east, while the other advanced along the Vistula into Russian Poland.

Germany moved to her western frontier for the attack upon France through Alsace-Lorraine, Luxemburg, and Belgium a first-line force of nineteen army corps grouped in six armies. This left for the eastern frontier only five army corps of the regular or first-line army. But these were largely supplemented by reserve corps formed of the reservists who were not required to bring up the regular regiments to war strength, and by corps of the Landwehr or second-line troops—men who, after completing their service with the colours and passing through the reserve, form a second army primarily destined for home defence, but also available for service beyond the frontiers. In the war of 1870 some of the hardest fighting was done by the Landwehr divisions. It is very likely that even the force on the French frontier was strengthened by some of these reserve and Landwehr units, and it is certain that a large force of Landwehr men was concentrated for the occupation of Luxemburg and Belgium in the rear of the fighting line. A third line was also called out for service, namely the Landsturm—men between thirty-nine and forty-five years of age who have completed their army and Landwehr service. The Landsturm ("the rising of the country") is normally supposed to be a levy *en masse* for home defence in a great emergency. In this instance they were called out to perform duties usually assigned to the Landwehr, namely the guarding of lines of communication and the garrisoning of the fortresses.

Of the young men liable to military service each year in Germany a considerable number are not actually called into the ranks of the army. These untrained men, amounting in the aggregate to a very considerable number in the course of the year, represent a fourth line of available undrilled material. As soon as the mobilisation was complete, recruiting offices were opened to enlist volunteers from this class, and it is said that in the first month nearly a million joined. To these were added about 600,000 young men who, if there had been no war, would in the ordinary course of things have been liable to begin their military service in the month of September. These were called out in the middle of August, and thus

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

shortly after the declaration of war the Kaiser had about a million and a half of new recruits under training in the dépôts and garrison towns.

It is difficult to state with any exactness the numbers available for the field armies, but it is probable that including first-line troops and Landwehr and the new reserve divisions, about three millions were immediately available, with another million rapidly coming into their places as communication and garrison troops.

These figures are given in order to show that at the outset of the war the Allies had no light task before them, even making an allowance for the difficulties that tended to cripple the fighting power of Austria. Without the help of England and the intrepid resistance of the Belgian army, Germany would have been able to invade France with an overwhelming superiority of numbers and to place a much larger force on her eastern frontier.

The British Government had no illusions on this subject. They did not make the dangerous mistake of underrating the enemy's power, and from the outset began to prepare seriously for a long war. The Expeditionary Force was regarded as only the vanguard of the armies that would gradually be put into the field. The secure command of the seas asserted from the first moment by our navy made it possible to gather all the forces of the Empire, and to make England itself a citadel in which new armies could be formed and trained. The Territorial force supplied at once a fairly trained young army of over 300,000 men, not only for home defence, but also available to a great extent by volunteering for garrison duty abroad and service in the field. The mobilisation of all branches of the army was carried out in a few days with the smooth efficiency of a well-planned and well-adjusted machine. It was the first time that mobilisation on this scale had ever been attempted in England, and many not unfriendly critics of our military system thought that it would be found a very difficult business. Within forty-eight hours of the mobilisation order every man was at his post—equipment, arms, stores were available in abundance at the points where they were wanted. The supply of horses completed by requisition proved to be ample. Additional transport was provided by taking over registered carts, vans, and motors—requisition being employed where necessary. The Territorials were at first assembled in improvised quarters or billets in cities and towns, and then moved into training camps or barracks and

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

garrison quarters as the Regulars assigned to the Expeditionary Force streamed away across the Channel. The army authorities took control of all the railways, the existing officials carrying out the actual executive work under the direction of Staff officers. Rumours that the enemy's agents might attempt to interrupt the mobilisation and the movement of the troops by damaging railways and bridges, or cutting telegraphs, led to large numbers of troops, police, and civilian helpers being employed in guarding the lines. The men thus engaged amounted in the aggregate to the numbers of a small army.

On the day when war was declared, Sir John Jellicoe had just taken command of the fleets in the North Sea. Sir John French was appointed to the command of the Expeditionary Force of three army corps and a cavalry division—the largest army England has ever sent into the field at the outset of a war. Next day Lord Kitchener was appointed Secretary of State for War. The appointment was a tribute to his unrivalled power for organisation. Within twenty-four hours he had outlined his plans, and Parliament was called upon to authorise the enlistment of half a million additional men for the land forces. It was explained that these were to be supplementary to the ordinary enlistments for the existing units of the army. They were to form a new army which was to be organised, equipped, armed, and trained in the first six months of the war, and to take the field at a later stage of the contest. There were already nearly 600,000 men under arms in our land armies at home, besides 150,000 men afloat in our fleets. Further forces were to be provided by a call upon the resources of the Empire beyond the seas—a call which met with an immediate and enthusiastic response. Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand had at once begun the organisation of contingents for service in Europe. India was preparing to send across the sea a force of 70,000 men—troops of the Indian army and the native states—the Princes vied with each other in offers of service, not only providing men and money, but also themselves volunteering for active service in the field. It was a wonderful revelation of the strength and unity of a great Empire.

Every one had recognised that in case of a European war England could mobilise for immediate service a naval power far exceeding the strength of any possible rival. But it was a surprise to find that within a week of the beginning of hostilities her military power could be expanded to over a

## THE DECLARATION OF WAR

million men. It is true that many of these were untrained material out of which soldiers were to be made. But two-thirds of this number had some degree of training, and many have had the actual experience of war service. The Territorials mobilised and permanently embodied had sufficient training to become very rapidly equal to Regular units. Before the war it had been a frequent subject of complaint that but few of the corps were up to their full establishment. But the war was not a week old, when they were turning away recruits, and many of those who had been accepted to complete their numbers were trained men eager to rejoin the ranks. There was such an abundance of these recruits that many of the Territorial units were able to form reserve battalions. In one instance such a second battalion was recruited over a thousand strong in four days.

While carrying through the mobilisation of the fleet and army, sending the Expeditionary Force across the Channel, and providing for the rapid expansion of our land forces, the Government, with the loyal support of all parties, was performing the equally difficult task of organising all manner of public services and interests during the trying transit from a state of peace to a state of war. It was a condition of things of which England had no experience since the wars against Napoleon a hundred years ago. In the century since Waterloo we have had only one war with a European Power, and that was a distant expedition to the far-off Crimea—a war during which there was no possible danger to our shores, and not the slightest interruption to our trade and our seaborne commerce. All our other wars had been Indian and colonial expeditions, in none of which the ordinary everyday life of the country was seriously affected. Now we had to deal with an opponent possessing considerable naval power, having frontiers close to our own shores, and able to put a highly trained and numerous army into the field. The declaration of war at once disorganised commercial and trade relations amounting to many millions each week; the withdrawal of hundreds of thousands of men from their ordinary occupations tended to disorganise home industry. Finally, the banking crisis produced by the war had an immediate effect on business and manufactures of every kind. The Government had to safeguard the credit of the country, tide the business world over the dangers of a commercial crisis, secure the trade routes from interruption, prevent a panic rise in the price of food, and arrange for the government of

#### THE DECLARATION OF WAR

the country itself under war conditions. It had to do all this without possessing the exceptional means of action that continental governments have at their command through the declaration of the state of war, which means the government of the whole country by the military authorities. In our empire and in England, as its centre, the necessities of war have to be met while preserving the constitutional liberties of the times of peace. But the Government had the hearty co-operation of men of all parties and of all classes. There was proof of this in the way in which, during the days when the Expeditionary Force was being transported to France, by the voluntary action of the press and the people, the secrets of its movements were kept until the operation had been completed.

In England the time of mobilisation produced far less disorganisation of the ordinary life of the country than in any other State in Europe. It was completed within a fortnight after the declaration of war, and by that time nearly all the Expeditionary Force was actually at the front in France. The public at home waited impatiently for the news of its entry into action, all the more impatiently because each day brought news of the progress of the German armies which were overrunning Belgium. There were rumours during this period that our army was actually joining hands with the Belgian troops, but the Headquarters Staff and the Government in London had accepted the plan of General Joffre and the French General Staff, according to which the British Expeditionary Force was to be placed on the left of a great allied army concentrated in the northern department of France, to advance across the Belgian frontier, and drive the Germans back across the Meuse. Before telling of the first battles fought by the British and French on the Belgian border, it will be well to describe the sending of the British Expeditionary Force to the front, show how our Navy held the command of the sea, and trace the course of events in Belgium itself from the violation of the frontier in the first days of August up to the opening of the great battle along the river Sambre and about Mons.



*Photo Topical*

**H.M. KING GEORGE V.  
OF ENGLAND**

"We are fighting for a worthy purpose, and we shall not lay down our arms until that purpose has been fully secured."—The King's Message



*Photo Meurisse*

**H.M. THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS II.  
OF RUSSIA**

"Russia, who has more than once shed her blood for the liberation of peoples from foreign yoke, seeks nothing except the establishment of truth and justice."—The Czar's Message to Galicia, Sept. 15, 1914



*Photo Topical*

**M. RAYMOND POINCARÉ**

President of the French Republic

"Endure and fight! . . . We shall gain the final victory; we shall gain it by unflagging will, endurance, and tenacity."—President Poincaré to the French people, Sept. 3, 1914

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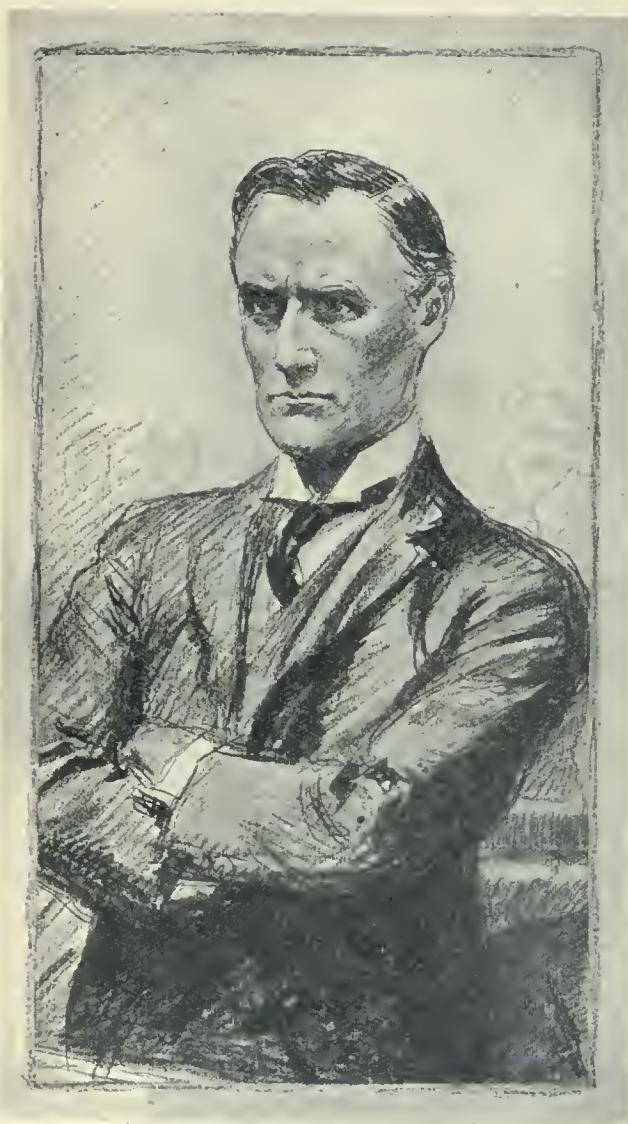
UNIVERSITY OF  
CALIFORNIA.



Drawn by Ralph Cleaver

THE SHADOW OF WAR

"We meet to-day under conditions of gravity which are almost unparalleled in the experience of every one of us. The issues of peace and war are hanging in the balance."—The Prime Minister, the House of Commons, August 1-4, 1914



Drawn by Arthur Garratt

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR EDWARD GREY**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

"We worked for peace up to the last moment and beyond the last moment.... We are now face to face with a situation and all the consequences which it may yet have to unfold."—Sir E. Grey  
in the House of Commons, August 3, 1914



Photo L. N. A.

THE SCENE IN THE PRECINCTS OF  
THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

TO WAR  
ULTIMATUM



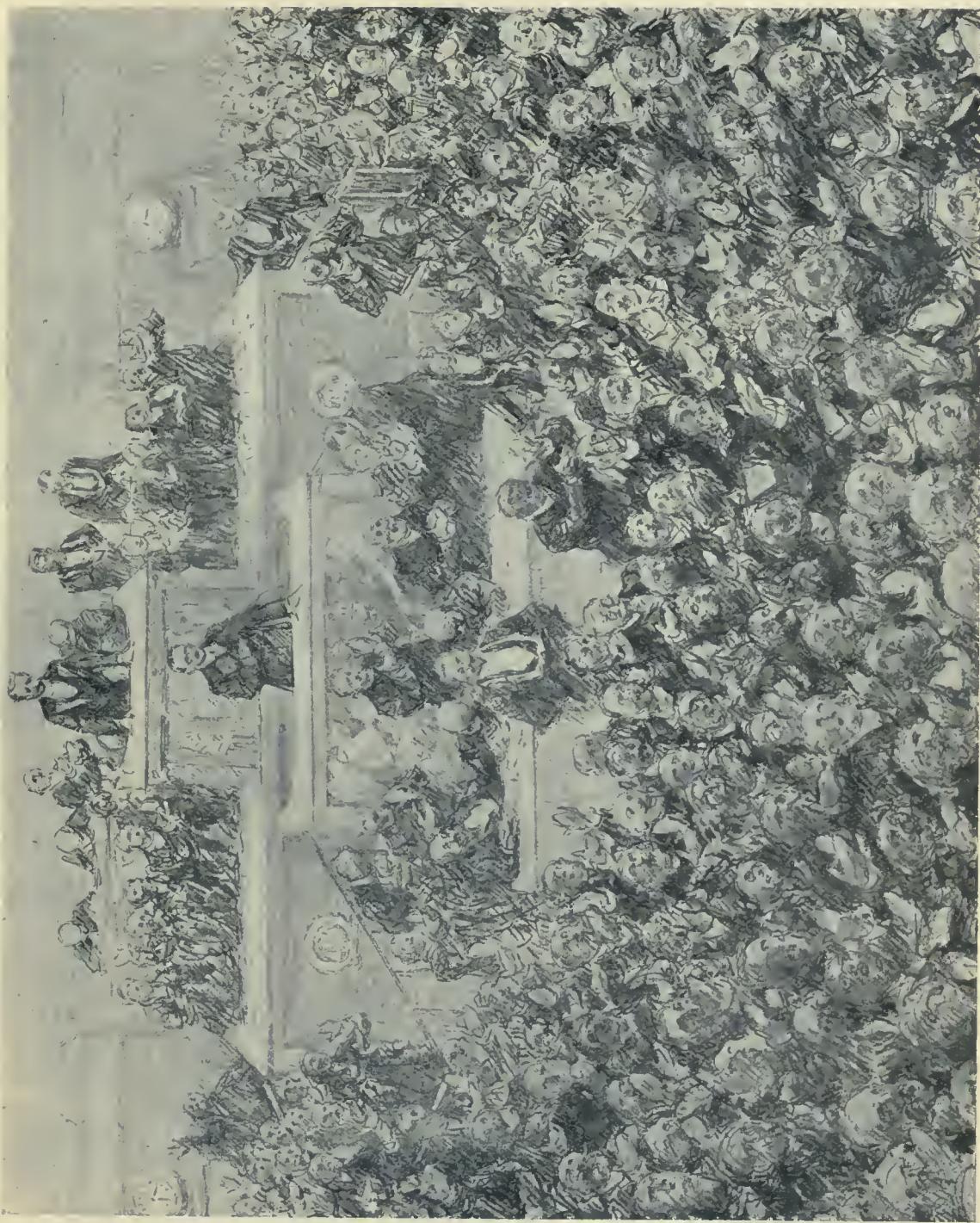
An impression by G. Torrance Stephenson

WAITING FOR WAR

"Great crowds gathered in Whitehall on Tuesday night, August 4, and waited eagerly for news of how Germany had received our ultimatum. It became known shortly before midnight that Britain had declared war. The crowd waited for the Ministers to leave Downing Street, and gave them an enthusiastic reception. The German Ambassador, who looked haggard, was in no way molested as he motored home."

#### HOW THE FRENCH CHAMBER RECEIVED THE NEWS OF ENGLAND'S AID

"There was a scene of tremendous enthusiasm in the French Chamber when it became known that Britain had stepped into the arena on the side of France. Amid tense excitement, M. Viviani read M. Poincaré's message that France was fighting for liberty and justice, and, strong in the knowledge of Britain's loyal friendship, was determined to defend herself from brutal and premeditated aggression. As he proceeded to tell of England's mobilisation, the whole House rose as one man and acclaimed Sir Francis Bertie, the British Ambassador, who was present on this historic occasion."



*From a sketch by Paul Renouard*



*Photo Bulla*

THE Czar OF RUSSIA BEARING A SACRED IKON  
AND BLESSING HIS TROOPS ON THE MARCH  
TOWARDS EAST PRUSSIA

"Raise your swords against the enemy and your hearts towards God with a prayer for Russia and for the Russian Czar."—The Grand Duke Nicholas, Commander-in-chief of the Russian Forces, August 18, 1914



*Drawn by Arthur Garratt*

"With all his warlike qualities the Servian soldier has the simple piety of the true Slav, and before going to battle he confesses his sins, prays to his saints, and leaves a candle burning before the sacred ikon."

To World  
Americanized



**PRINCE LICHTNOWSKY**

The German Ambassador, at the Foreign Office the day war was declared



**FIELD-MARSHAL EARL KITCHENER, K.C.B.**

"You have to perform a task which will need all your courage, your energy, your patience. Remember that the honour of the British Army depends upon your individual conduct."—Lord Kitchener's Message to the Expeditionary Force

*Photo Topical*



**FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, K.C.B.**

"In spite of hard marching and fighting the British force is in the best of spirits."—Sir John French's telegram, August 25, 1914

*Photo Haines*



Photo "Illustrations Bureau"

THE 6TH DRAGOON GUARDS  
(THE CARABINERS) JOINING  
THEIR REGIMENT AT  
CANTERBURY



Photo "Photo Press"

ROYAL FIELD ARTILLERY AT NINE  
ELMS PREPARING TO ENTRAIN  
WITH THEIR 1½ POUNDER  
FIELD GUNS



Photo "Illustrations Bureau"

NAVAL RESERVES ON THE  
WAY TO THEIR SHIPS



*Photo C. N.*

COMMANDERING HORSES



*Photo Record Press*

MARINES LEAVE WATERLOO

THE BRITISH ARMY  
IN THE FIELD



Photo Sport and General

**SWARING-IN RECRUITS**



Photo "Illustrations" Bureau

**NEW RECRUITS**



Photo L. N. A.

LORD KITCHENER LEAVING THE WAR OFFICE TO  
ATTEND HIS FIRST CABINET MEETING AFTER HE  
WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY FOR WAR

On the steps is Mr. F. E. Smith, K.C., then  
newly appointed Chief of the Press Bureau



*Drawn by Lionel Edwards*

MOUNTED SENTRY CHALLENGING A  
MOTOR CYCLIST ON AN ENGLISH  
COUNTRY ROAD



GUARDING THE  
MAIN ROADS ROUND  
PARIS

A vision of the  
suburbs at night  
immediately after  
war was declared



Photo L. N. A.

MOBILISING THE CIVIL GUARD AT ANTWERP



PATROLLING THE PARIS BOULEVARDS AT N

UPON THE  
ALEXANDER COLUMN



"Sire, do not hesitate to lean fearlessly on the invincible strength and courage of the people. O Czar! the whole Russian Fatherland is with thee".

*Painted by Arthur Watts*

PRAYING FOR VICTORY AT THE  
ALEXANDER COLUMN





Drawn by Frank Dadd

**SHARPENING THE FRENCH SWORD OF VENGEANCE**

Outside the Porte de la Craffe a young infantry officer requisitioned a knife-grinder's machine and to the amusement of his comrades proceeded to sharpen his sword in order, as he said, "to cut Alsace-Lorraine"



*From a sketch by an artist in Paris (roughly finished by Gilbert Holiday)*

**PARIS ON THE ALERT**  
A sentry guarding  
one of the search-  
lights on the roof  
of the Automobile  
Club

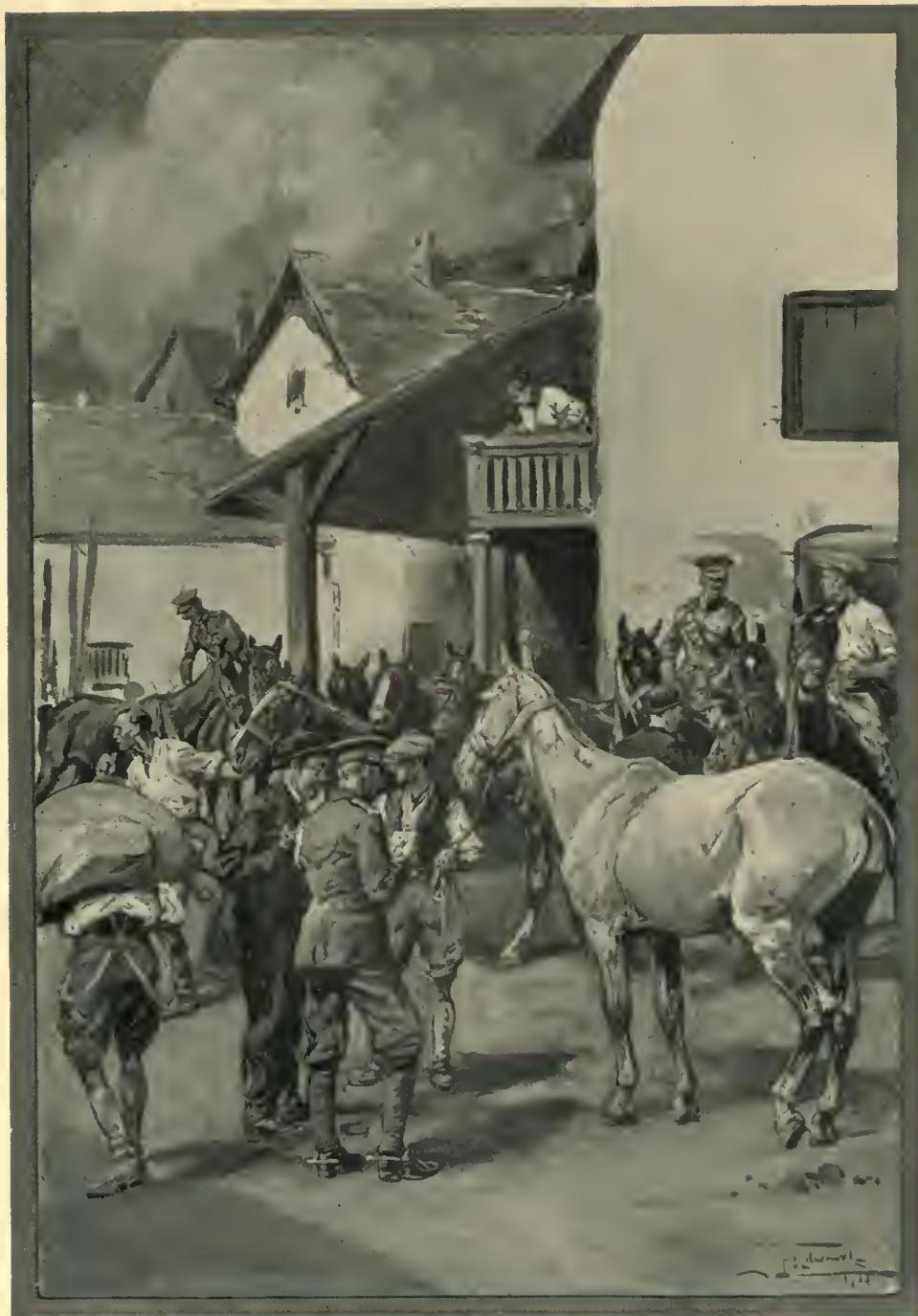


Drawn by A. Van Anrooy, from a sketch by Philip Gibbs

**BOY SCOUTS CONVOYING A FORAGE WAGON AT NANCY**

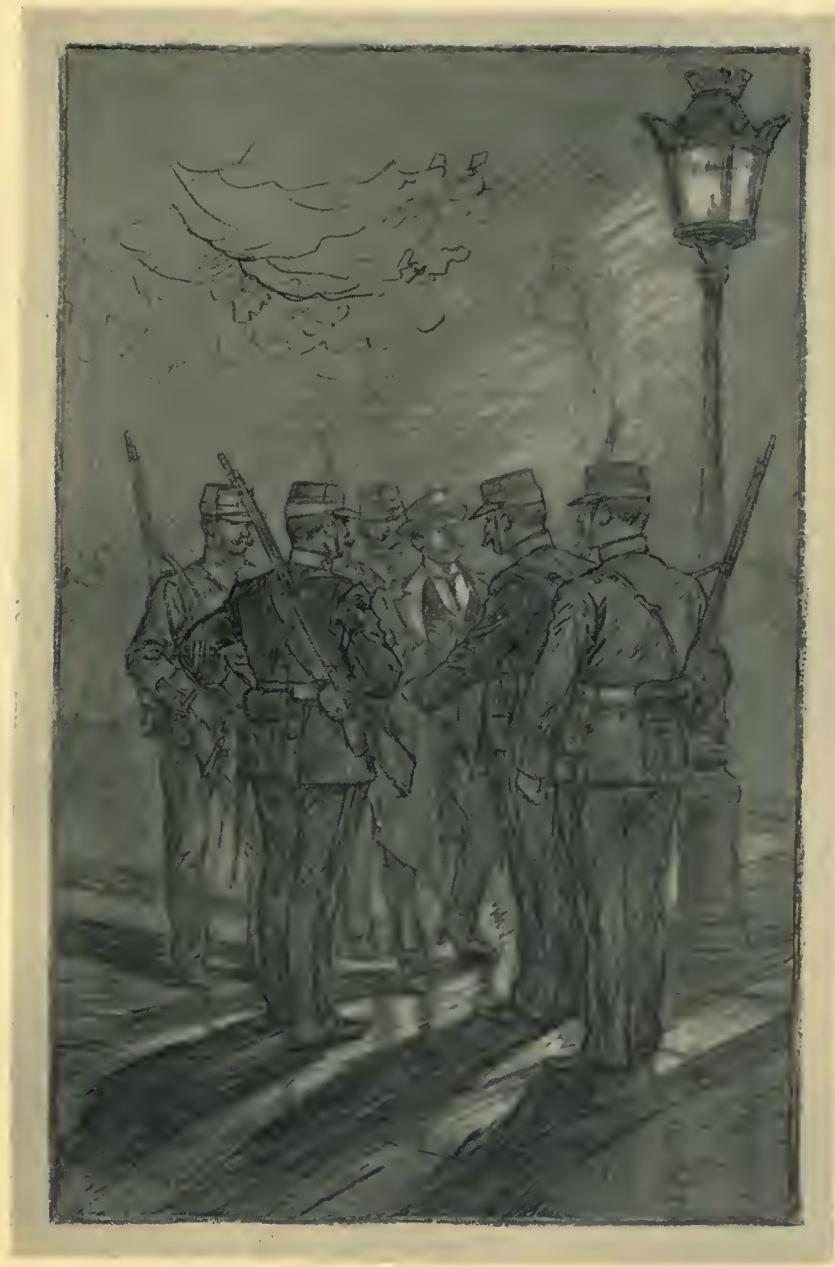
The French Boy Scouts, like our own, are doing all they can to assist the army and proving invaluable in many capacities. The boys depicted here are attached to the 20th Army Corps

*The War*  
Illustrations



*Drawn by Lionel Edwards*

**COLLECTING REGISTERED HORSES FOR THE WAR**  
A scene to be witnessed in dealers' yards throughout  
the country during August



When mobilisation was complete every man up to 45 who went about Paris in civilian dress was suspect and his papers were frequently demanded



**THE EMPERORS OF AUSTRIA AND GERMANY**  
A snapshot taken shortly before the Austrian ultimatum was sent to Servia



GREAT WAR DEMONSTRATION HELD IN BERLIN  
ON AUGUST 2, 1914

THE CROWN PRINCE  
OF GERMANY IN THE FIELD



THE CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY IN THE FIELD

In the opinion of many, the Crown Prince has done more than the German Emperor in the furtherance of plans for war, while in the field the army under his command has achieved less success than any other German force



Drawn by Steven Spurrier

**THE GERMAN EXODUS FROM LONDON  
ON THE EVE OF WAR**

A strange sight was witnessed at Liverpool Street Station on Bank Holiday evening (August 3), when the stream of returning excursionists encountered crowds of German reservists hurrying home to fight for the Fatherland. There were similar scenes at Victoria and Charing Cross, whence also large numbers of Frenchmen went off to rejoin their regiments

*The Watchers*  
ARMED GUARD



*Sketch by Gilbert Holiday*

ONE OF THE ARMED WATCHERS WHO, IN CON-  
JUNCTION WITH THE NAVAL SEARCHLIGHTS,  
KEEP GUARD ALONG THE COAST



Drawn by Alfred Leet:

**WATCHING FOR HOSTILE AIRSHIPS ON THE  
FRENCH FRONTIER**

A strong military guard with searchlights is maintained at all points along the European frontiers, even in times of peace



**THE RUE DE RIVOLI AT NIGHT**

Watching for German airships that were expected to attack the wireless station on the Eiffel Tower



**PARIS IN WAR TIME**  
Compulsory early closing



French infantry on the way to entrain for the frontier

"DÉPART RÉGULIER"



French troops for the front departing from Paris

"DÉPART POPULAIRE"

THE WAR  
ILLUSTRATED



*Photo Presse Centrale*

AUSTRIAN RESERVES, WITH LUGGAGE, ON THEIR WAY TO JOIN THE COLOURS WHEN AUSTRIA WAS CONCENTRATING ON THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER, LEAVING ONLY A SMALL FORCE TO DEAL WITH SERVIA



*Photo International Illustrations, Ltd.*

GERMAN TROOPS UNLOADING BAGGAGE AND AMMUNITION NEAR THE FRENCH FRONTIER, AFTER THE SEIZURE OF LUXEMBURG

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA



Drawn by Georges Scott

**EVERY SON OF FRANCE IS AT HIS POST**

One of the Guard of Veterans, most of whom fought in the Franco-German War of 1870



Drawn by Georges Scott

**TO BERLIN**

An advance guard of Cossacks invading  
East Prussia



Drawn by Georges Scott

**No THOROUGHFARE:**  
A French outpost on the frontier  
of Lorraine

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## II

### ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

FOR an island Power like Britain, the first condition that makes military action on the Continent possible is the secure command of the sea. In the same way it is the command of the sea that is our real defence against invasion. A little more than a century ago, for nearly twelve months the magnificent army which afterwards marched in triumph from the Rhine to the western frontiers of Russia, the army of Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland, was encamped on the French shore of the British Channel, almost in sight of England. But these few miles of grey-green sea were as impassable a barrier as if it had been an ocean. The real defence of England lay in the fleets that blockaded every French port and fought victoriously at Trafalgar. And it was the command of the sea secured by these same fleets that enabled England to send its armies into the Spanish peninsula, to maintain them there for years, and by the constant drain they established on the resources of the French Empire gradually undermine its strength until at last, while the allied armies of Europe marched across the Rhine, Wellington's veterans fought their way to the Pyrenees and entered Southern France. British military action in this great crisis of the world's history ultimately depended on British naval power.

So it is in the present war, we have been able to send to the front for a Continental campaign the largest army that England has ever placed in the field at the beginning of a war, and this was done while the enemy's fleet—the strongest in Europe after our own—was still intact. The first movements of our troops across the Channel were actually made before a single shot had been fired in battle on the sea. Thanks to the overwhelming superiority of our navy, we had not to conquer the command of the sea—we possessed it from the first moment of the conflict.

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

For many years the general plan under which our army was organised had made provision for the speedy sending of an expeditionary force across the seas. The British army has to fulfil a permanent task the extent of which is not generally realised. The great armies of the Continent are destined to operate on the frontiers of the countries to which they belong. This simplifies the whole organisation. But our army has to maintain year after year a force of about 80,000 men on a war footing, or at least in immediate preparation for war, in the trying tropical climate of India. We have to provide for a very large reinforcement of this army in the event of trouble on the Indian frontiers, and in the Far East, and to supply large drafts each year to replace time-expired men and casualties. We have further to maintain the garrisons at Gibraltar and Malta, in Egypt and at Aden, which secure the road to India. In all, we have to keep out of the country a permanent force of over 100,000 men.

The regular army at home, with the exception of the Guards' Brigades and the Household Cavalry, practically represents the dépôt troops and the reserves of this army in India and in the Mediterranean garrisons. It is sometimes said that a line battalion at home "looks very young." It is forgotten that this battalion is linked with another on service oversea, and has each year to send a draft of its older men to India or the Mediterranean. The home battalions are largely composed of young recruits in training and form the cadres destined to be brought up to full war strength by embodying in their ranks some hundreds of older men when the reservists are called up on mobilisation.

But besides providing permanently for the Indian and Mediterranean garrisons, our army has a further task. We may at any moment be involved in a war on the frontiers of the Empire overseas which would require the dispatch of an expedition from England to supplement the local forces. For this purpose troops would be drawn from the divisions stationed at the training camps of Aldershot and Salisbury Plain. These are kept in a state of readiness for a move, and the possession of these forces has at various times given our army a marked advantage over the Continental armies, which, as has been said, are primarily home defence forces. Thus, for instance, in 1900, when it was necessary to undertake operations in China at the briefest notice, Germany had no troops available for foreign service overseas, and had to raise

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

new regiments by calling for volunteers from the regular army.

It had long been recognised that it was necessary to have an expeditionary force ready at short notice for these minor campaigns, but it has been only in recent years that it has been accepted as a principle of our army organisation that we must prepare in time of peace to send a considerable force at an early date after the outbreak of war to intervene in a possible conflict in Europe. Our fleet is not only our first line of defence, but our chief weapon. But even the most ardent advocates of the supreme importance of sea power recognise that the operations of the fleet have to be supplemented by a military force. As Admiral Mahan has well pointed out, it was the constant pressure of British sea power that finally broke down the military despotism of Napoleon. But this sea power was supplemented by military action, which it had rendered possible for England. Wellington's army in Spain was the "expeditionary force" of a century ago.

In 1870, when Mr. Gladstone asked for a special vote of the House of Commons to enable military preparations to be made for assisting the Belgians in defending their neutrality, if such a step should become necessary, it was understood that the force that would be employed would be about 30,000 men. At the beginning of the South African War, when we mobilised an expeditionary force to South Africa, it was made up of Buller's Army Corps, with a cavalry division, and a brigade of white troops from India for Natal. In all, about 50,000 men were employed at the outset, and this was supposed to be a great effort. In fact, at the time the newspapers used an expression now applied to the gigantic army of Russia, and spoke of Buller's Army Corps as "the steam-roller" that would crush out all resistance. After the "black week" of December 1899, division after division was mobilised and sent to South Africa. All the Colonies supplied large contingents, and at last we had some 200,000 men in the field. It was a revelation of the possible development of our military power for an oversea expedition. Accordingly when Lord Haldane reorganised the army and it was recognised that the sending of an expeditionary force to the Continent must be one of the contingencies provided for, there was no longer talk of a mere 30,000 or 40,000 men, but the force to be sent was fixed at over 150,000—three army corps and one or two cavalry divisions.

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

In comparison with the enormous armies placed on their frontiers by the belligerent Powers of the Continent, 150,000 men seems a small number, but in the present war these three army corps were just what was wanted to enable France to open the campaign on a footing of something like equality with Germany. Since the beginning of the *entente*, the French Staff had counted on this assistance. According to their calculations, in the event of war Germany would place at the outset perhaps twenty of its twenty-six army corps on the eastern frontier of France. The French army would mobilise and place on the same frontier eighteen army corps; the British expeditionary force was, therefore, necessary to make the numbers at all equal. Judging by the writings of General Langlois and other French military critics in touch with the General Staff in Paris, the French authorities had the highest opinion of the efficiency and fighting value of our men, but were always haunted by an anxious doubt as to whether their help would arrive in time. It was said that the English mobilisation and the transport of the army across the Channel would necessarily be slow, and that our three army corps would not be in line with the French until after the first decisive battle on which the whole fortune of the war might depend. It is probable that our French friends based their opinion on the somewhat leisurely fashion in which Buller's army was mobilised and sent off in 1899. But in the fifteen years that have passed since then, our whole army system has been reorganised, with a definite view to the tasks our military forces have to fulfil. This secured a considerable acceleration in the passage from a peace to a war footing. There was the further gain of the delay in the German advance caused by the gallant resistance of Belgium, and our troops stood side by side with those of France in the first great battle on the frontier.

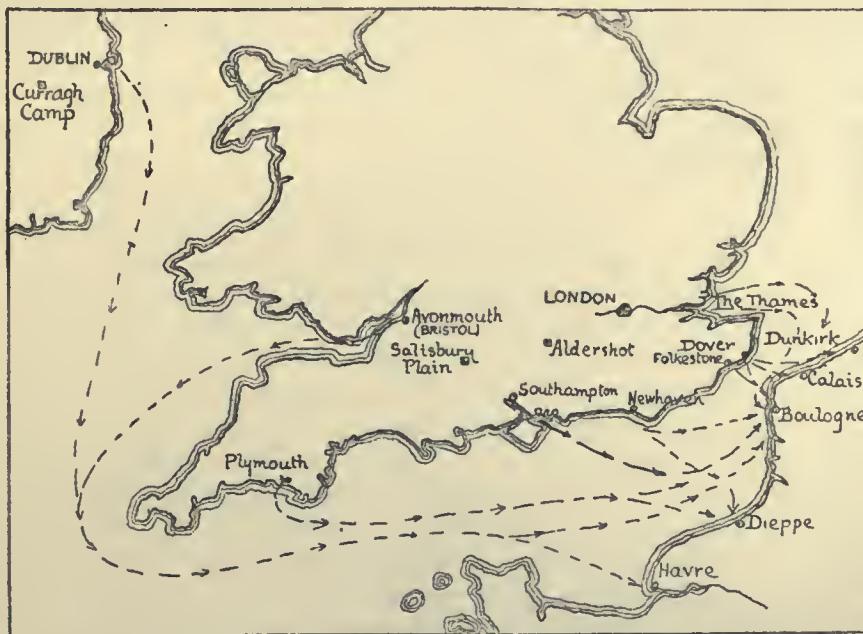
General arrangements had been made with the French Staff, and as soon as war had been declared, a French officer of high rank came over to London in order to be in touch with our own Headquarters Staff. In order to avoid unnecessarily long journeys by railway in France, and to keep the lines clear as far as possible for the movement of the French armies, it was arranged that the post of the British should be on the extreme left of the great battle-line of France. This would place our army in the northern departments near the Belgian frontier, and it would be concentrated and supplied by an excellent system of short railway lines

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

running to the ports on the English Channel between the Seine and the Belgian frontier.

The preparations for the transport of the expedition began with the first hour of the mobilisation. Though the numbers were so much larger, it was really a simpler task than the sending of a single army corps had been fifteen years ago. Not only was the whole machinery of organisation much more complete, but the work to be done was easier. In the case of an overseas expedition which requires a voyage of some weeks, huge transports have to be taken up for the service and specially prepared for the accommodation of the men and horses. It is estimated that for a sea voyage of over a week, one has to deduct from the tonnage of a transport about 40 per cent. to allow for engine space, coals, and crew—four tons of space have to be allowed for each man; thus for the transport of a battalion a little over 1,000 strong (officers and men included), one would require a 7,000-ton steamer. But in the case of a short voyage to France, no such elaborate arrangements were necessary.

Advance parties of Staff officers and a few non-commissioned officers and men were at once sent across the Channel to the various ports where the troops were to land. These made all the arrangements for their reception and their



THE TRANSPORT OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

subsequent movement by rail to the fighting front. The French coast from Havre to Dunkirk became the base of the expedition. Before a single battalion had landed in France, enormous quantities of stores were being disembarked in all the ports on this coast-line, and dépôts formed for the supply of the army.

There was no need to effect any preliminary concentration at the ports of embarkment in England. Abundance of transport was immediately available. Southampton was selected as the chief point of departure, and for a fortnight the military authorities were in exclusive possession of the port. The first troops sent away from this point were those of the Aldershot division. But it was not the only port of embarkation. Troops were sent from the Thames—where the well-equipped riverside stations at Tilbury and Queenborough proved particularly useful—from Dover, Folkestone, and Newhaven, from Plymouth in the west, and from Avonmouth, the new port of Bristol. The troops from the Curragh camp and other stations in Ireland embarked at Dublin.

To provide for the transport of the infantry passenger steamers usually employed in home or cross-Channel traffic were chartered in large numbers. For the short voyage, the men could be crowded on board like excursionists on a Bank Holiday. The war had already stopped some of the cross-Channel and North Sea services. Many of the home services were brought almost to a standstill by their steamers being requisitioned. For more than a week there was only one steamer left for the Holyhead and North Wall service to Dublin. Most of the steamers of the North-Western and Great Western Companies were taken up as well as the Tyne fleet of boats usually engaged in the Antwerp and Hook of Holland service, the Great Central Company's steamers usually employed in the North Sea, the steamers of the Scotch lines, and those of the cross-Channel services to Ostend and France. For the cavalry and artillery, numbers of large commercial steamers that happened to be in harbour were cleared and chartered as transports. Thus the Expeditionary Force was forwarded to France, so to say, piecemeal, from many points, the streams of transports, large and small, crossing and re-crossing the Channel day and night for a fortnight.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Flying Corps transported most of its machines to France by a bold cross-Channel flight.

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

Many of those who made the voyage were at first surprised to see that there was no naval escort. In imagination they had always pictured the passage of an English expedition across the Channel as the progress of a great crowd of shipping escorted by a fleet of cruisers. But the transports, starting one by one, sometimes never sighted a fighting ship from the beginning to the end of their voyage, though at times there was a glimpse of a torpedo-boat destroyer patrolling the Channel, or lying off the port of disembarkation. The fact was that measures had been taken which made any close escort of the transports unnecessary. The navy had taken possession of the North Sea and "bottled up" the German fleet behind its shore defences. As a safeguard against any venturesome raiders slipping through the blockade a further precaution had been taken. A cruiser squadron patrolled the narrow waters between the North Foreland and the opposite coast, thus closing the North Sea entrance to the Channel, and a naval airship and a group of aeroplanes moved to and fro over the same stretch of sea, keeping a careful look out for any suspicious craft. The crowded transports could thus make their voyages in absolute security.

But even with all these precautions, all possible secrecy was maintained as to the progress of the movement. Not a word was said in the press, though every one knew that the expedition was on its way, and our forces were accumulating somewhere on the opposite side of the Channel. There was, if anything, an exaggeration about this secrecy, for it was impossible to prevent it being known over half the world that the British army was on its way to the continental theatre of war. The arrival of the troops in France was known to tens of thousands immediately, and the American and Italian papers published full accounts of the landing at Boulogne more than a week before any newspaper in Great Britain or Ireland had printed a word on the subject. As usual when a secret is being kept, wild rumours circulated. It was said that tens of thousands of British troops were in Antwerp or passing through Ostend, and ill-judged eulogists of the foresight of our Government were telling their friends, "on the highest authority," that several thousands had embarked even before war was declared. No troops were sent to Belgium, because the French plan of campaign, which our Staff accepted, was based upon the idea of assisting Belgium by an attack upon the German invaders across the northern frontier of France.

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

The troops proceeding to the front had themselves no precise information as to their destinations. A battalion mobilised for the expedition would receive orders to entrain at such and such an hour and at such a station. Even at the moment of departure they did not know, except by a shrewd guess, to which port on the coast they were being conveyed. There were no enthusiastic demonstrations, such as had accompanied the departure of the troops for South Africa, for amid the continual movement of troops during the first days of mobilisation, the sight of khaki-clad men marching through the streets had become familiar, and no one could say whether those he saw on the move were going to the front or bound for some training station. At Southampton, where the greatest number were embarked, a rest camp had been formed on the outskirts of the city ; the troops generally arrived in the evening or during the night. Some of the trains were run to the quayside, in other cases the men marched through the streets. For more than a week, night after night, people woke to hear the tramp of men and the rolling of wheels, which went on for hours.

On the other side of the Channel the disembarkations were made at Havre, Dieppe, Boulogne, Calais, and Dunkirk, and stores and small detachments were landed at many little places between these ports. The largest number of troops disembarked at Boulogne, where for several days there was a large concentration of our men. They had slipped silently and secretly away from England, but on the French coast their arrival was like an anticipated triumph. Crowds watched the khaki-clad regiments disembarking. They were cheered as they moved through the streets, flowers, cigarettes, all manner of little gifts were heaped upon them, and general admiration was expressed at the athletic appearance and military bearing of the men. At Boulogne they marched through the town and up to the heights, where a great rest camp had been prepared around the tall column erected by Napoleon to commemorate the concentration on this very ground of the "armée d'Angleterre"—the "army of England"—intended for the invasion of our country. By a strange turn in the course of events, the army of England, in another sense, was now encamped around Napoleon's monument. The old enemies had become allies.

From the coast ports, where the various brigades and divisions had formed and the men of the different regiments first realised their place in the general scheme, the troops

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

were forwarded by railway to the line of Cambrai and Le Cateau, where they were close to the points at which they were to cross the Belgian frontier. When the actual operations began, two corps, the First and Second, and the cavalry division had arrived, and the Third Corps was being moved up from the coast.

A British army corps is made up of two divisions of infantry. In each division there are three infantry brigades, each of four battalions ; the total brigade strength being about 4,000 men. To each division there are attached twelve batteries of artillery, these being made up of nine batteries of field guns, two batteries of howitzers, and one battery of heavy guns, 4·7 60-pounders on travelling carriages. The division has also a small mounted force, a contingent of Royal Engineers, and transport and supply column and ambulances. The total strength of a division is about 19,500 men, with over 7,000 horses, these being mostly for draft purposes, with the artillery and transport. Two of these divisions are grouped in the army corps, and the General commanding it has further at his disposal a body of mounted troops with a horse artillery battery, a battalion of infantry, engineer companies for telegraph work and bridging, an aviation detachment, a reserve of ambulances, and a transport and supply column. The army corps is thus a little army fully provided with all arms of the service. It is comparatively weak in mounted troops, as it is mainly an artillery and infantry force. But attached to each group of army corps there is at least one cavalry division, made up of twelve regiments grouped in four brigades, and four batteries of horse artillery, besides engineers, ambulances, transport, and supply. The strength of a cavalry division is about 9,600 men.

The Expeditionary Force sent to France was made up of three complete army corps and one cavalry division. The total strength would be about 160,000 men and nearly 70,000 horses.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force, Field-Marshal Sir John French, is one of those soldiers whose name has come to inspire unbounded confidence, both in the army and with the general public. His appointment to the command was most popular. Until a few months before the war he had been Chief of the General Staff, a post the possession of which is understood to imply the officer holding it will have the chief command in any important war during his term of office. On his resignation in the spring, as the

#### ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

result of a misunderstanding in a matter of military discipline, it was still rightly supposed that in the event of war he would be called to the chief command. He has had a remarkable career. Born in 1852, he first entered the navy. He was a cadet on board the old *Britannia*, and served for a while as a midshipman. In 1874 he transferred his services to the army and received a commission in the 8th Hussars. He was a keen cavalry officer, and saw his first active service under trying conditions in the Soudan Campaign of 1884-5—the unsuccessful attempt to relieve Khartoum and save Gordon. He was one of the officers of the mere handful of mounted men that acted as the “eyes and ears” of the desert column, and he took part in the desperate fighting at Abu Klea, Gubat, and Metemneh. He was in Natal at the beginning of the South African War in 1899. He commanded the troops at the battle of Elandslaagte and led the cavalry at Reitfontein. He got out of Ladysmith by the last train that left the place, having been called away to take command of the cavalry division attached to Buller’s Army Corps. He led the ride across the veldt to the relief of Kimberley, helped to stop the retreat of Cronje at Paardeberg. He then commanded the cavalry in the advance on Pretoria, and took part in various operations up to the close of the war. Since then he has commanded the Aldershot division and acted as Chief of the General Staff of the army.

Nowhere was the appointment of Sir John French to the command more popular than in France itself. He had more than once been present with the French Staff at the annual manœuvres, and was personally known to the chiefs of the army. His reputation as a soldier was known to the French people generally through their press. His very name was thought to have a happy appropriateness. People said that he must be a Frenchman by descent, and translating his name they spoke of him as “Le général Français.” Those who had looked up his record and knew that he was an Irishman found in this an additional reason for welcoming him, and spoke of the many Irish soldiers who had fought for France under the old monarchy and the Empire, and the soldiers of Irish descent, like Neil and MacMahon, who had distinguished themselves in the French army in later days. Before proceeding to the front, he made a flying visit to Paris; crowds waited for hours outside the Gare du Nord to welcome him, and he drove through the streets to the Elysée between cheering lines of enthusiastic Parisians.

## ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

Amongst those who were associated with him in the direction of the Expeditionary Force were some of the most distinguished soldiers of the Empire. General Sir James Grierson, who was to have commanded the Second Army Corps, died suddenly soon after his arrival in France. His death was a serious loss to the expedition, for no man in England knew the German army better. He had acted as military attaché in Berlin for many years, and had been the British representative on the staff of the German General, Count Waldersee, in China. General Horace Smith-Dorrien succeeded him as the commander of the Second Corps. Sir Horace has a long record of distinguished service, beginning with the Zulu War of 1879. He was with Wolseley in Egypt and the Soudan, taking part in the action of Tel-el-Kebir and the desert fighting on the Upper Nile in the Gordon Relief Expedition. He remained some time on the frontier with the new Egyptian army and shared in the victory of Toski. Then came staff service in India, including the Chitral campaign. He commanded a brigade in the South African War, and later a division, and it was during this war that he won his promotion to the rank of Major-General by good service in the field. After the war he returned to India, where he commanded the frontier district of Quetta. In 1912 he was promoted to full General's rank and took over the southern command in England. Through all this long military career Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien has been able to win the absolute confidence and devoted service of all under his command in peace or war.

General Sir Douglas Haig, who commanded the First Corps, was, like General French, a cavalry officer. He had seen service in the Soudan and South Africa, had been Chief of the Staff in India, and had lately held the Aldershot command. General Sir William Pulteney, who commanded the Third Corps, saw his first war service in the Tel-el-Kebir campaign as an officer of the Guards Brigade. He was afterwards employed for some years in the Uganda Protectorate, where he did some useful empire-making work, took part in several minor wars, and found his recreation in big game shooting. After this he served in the South African War. General Allenby, who commanded the cavalry division, had seen much colonial war service in the Bechuanaland Expedition, the Zulu War, and under Sir John French in South Africa.

The troops available in the first fighting were the First

#### ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT

Army Corps made up of the first and second divisions and including two brigades of Guards, the Second Army Corps, made up of the third and fifth divisions, and General Allenby's division of cavalry. This would be a force of about 70,000 or 80,000 men, after allowing for line of communication troops left behind. The Third Corps was arriving : one of its divisions, the fourth, under General Snow, was available on the third day of the campaign.

The first days in France had been a pleasant experience for our troops. They found themselves everywhere welcomed and feted by the people, and hailed as if they were the saviours of the country. A number of interpreters had been provided, but the newcomers found a way of making themselves understood, using the language of signs and gestures, eked out by daring attempts to talk French with the help of a short vocabulary of useful words thoughtfully provided by the War Office. It is said their first inquiry in a French town was generally for an "Anglais papier." They were paid in French money, but at first found very little use for it, for most of the things they wanted were forced upon them as presents, and they were polite enough to pretend that they really liked French tobacco. The weather was gloriously fine, bright sunshine without a drop of rain, and the beautiful country of northern France was looking its best. "This isn't like war—it's just a bit of a holiday with nothing to pay," was the verdict of one of the expeditionaries quartered in a French village and fraternising with a host of new-made friends.

ILLUSTRATION



*Painted by Ralph Cleaver*

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH, WHO  
COMMANDS OUR ARMY IN FRANCE, ARRIV-  
ING AT THE MINISTRY OF WAR, PARIS



LIMITED  
PRINTS



*From a photo*

**FIELD-MARSHAL SIR JOHN FRENCH ARRIVING AT  
BOULOGNE**

"The transport of the troops from England both by sea and by rail was effected in the best order and without a check."—Sir John French in official dispatch of Sept. 7

THE SEAFORTH  
HIGHLANDERS



THE SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS MARCHING  
THROUGH THE THIRTEENTH-CENTURY  
PORTE DES DUNES AT BOULOGNE



**BRITISH TROOPS AT BOULOGNE**  
The Seaforth Highlanders quartered in a courtyard  
English guns guarded by French reservists  
The Army Service Corps ready to entrain

THE GREAT  
ARMED FORCE



ARMY SERVICE WAGONS DRIVING THROUGH  
BOULOGNE AMID THE FRANTIC ACCLAMATION  
OF THE FRENCH PEOPLE



**THE ENGLISH CAMP OUTSIDE BOULOGNE**  
On the spot occupied by Napoleon's great  
Army of Invasion in 1804

Photo Topical  
French Infantry



*Photo Topical*.

FRENCH INFANTRY WAITING FOR THEIR  
TRAIN AT THE GARE DE LYON, PARIS



*Drawn by Harry Rountree*

A BRITISH INFANTRYMAN IN FRANCE  
ENJOYING AN HOUR OFF DUTY

NO. 1750  
ARMED GUARD



FRENCH TROOPS ON THE WAY TO THE FRONT.  
"VIVE LE GÉNIE! VIVE LES DRAGONS!"



WOMEN AT WORK IN THE FIELDS IN FRANCE, ALL  
ABLE-BODIED MEN HAVING GONE TO THE FRONT

Who shall stay to reap the harvest when the autumn days have come?  
But the drum answered, Come,  
Death shall reap a braver harvest when the autumn days have come.  
*Bret Harte*

*The French*



Drawn by *Gilbert Holiday*

THE GENEROUS FRENCH GIVING OF  
THEIR BEST TO BRITISH TROOPS



Drawn by W. B. Wollen, R.I.

THE ROAD TO ALSACE  
French Dragoons on their way to the frontier



Drawn by Georges Scott

BRITISH SOLDIERS ON THEIR WAY TO THE  
FRONT, HALTING FOR REFRESHMENTS AT A  
VILLAGE IN NORMANDY

LIBRARY OF  
CALIFORNIA



*From a photo*

**TO THE FIRING LINE**

Part of a supply column of the British troops in France, with its escort of British infantry

THE WORLD  
AND ITS WARS



ENGLISH OFFICERS ENJOYING A HASTY MEAL WITH  
AN INTERPRETER OF THE FRENCH MILITARY STAFF

### III

#### BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

THE rapid and systematic expansion of the German navy had begun in 1898 when Admiral von Tirpitz became Minister of State and Naval Secretary at Berlin—a post he has held ever since, through many Cabinet changes. He was given this post in order to carry out the Kaiser's plans for securing to Germany "a future upon the waters." Much had already been done to develop the naval power of the German Empire. Far-reaching plans were now taken in hand, the naval programme being fixed not by annual estimates, but by a programme extending over several years in advance, so as to secure a continuous policy. At first this new factor in the situation attracted very little attention in England outside the somewhat narrow circle of naval experts. This was partly because for some years before France had been regarded as our most likely opponent in war, thanks to rivalries in Africa and in the Far East. Three times in a few years we had been in a position of dangerously strained relations with our present ally, French activity in Siam, on the Nile, and on the Niger bringing us to the verge of hostilities. Our naval plans and the distribution of our fleet were based on the possibility of war with France and Russia.

In 1900 Sir John (now Lord) Fisher became one of the Sea Lords of the Admiralty, and a reorganisation of the navy began. The settlement of our disputes with France, the coming of the Entente, and the alarm caused by the growth of the German navy, led to a complete change in our naval plans. The Channel and the Mediterranean were no longer the supposed danger-areas of a possible war. The North Sea was the more likely scene of a future conflict. The east coast became the new front, and it was gradually provided with naval bases, torpedo-boat and submarine stations, and later on aviation stations, from Dover northwards to

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands. The annual shipbuilding programme was arranged so as to give the British a wide margin of superiority over the German fleet, this being further secured by a continual progress in the development of the various types of fighting ships and in the armament of the battle line. Finally, the grouping of the ships and squadrons was so rearranged that while leaving a certain force in far-off waters, the main fighting strength of the fleet was always in the home seas, ready for rapid concentration on the dangerous North Sea area.

When the naval estimates were introduced in the spring of 1914, Mr. Winston Churchill announced that there would be no great naval manœuvres in the summer, but that instead there would be a general mobilisation of the fleet. The abandonment of the manœuvres was supposed at the time by hostile critics to be a mistaken step inspired chiefly by the desire to make a relatively small saving in the naval vote. But the experiment of mobilisation would in any case have been a most valuable one, and in this instance it was most fortunate for the country that the change had been made. The experimental mobilisation did not include the whole of our ships. To have manned them completely would have meant that all the reserves were called up, and this would have caused considerable dislocation of the necessary peace traffic of the country. But it was the largest mobilisation that had ever been attempted. All our chief fighting squadrons were fully manned, and the great Armada that anchored inside the Isle of Wight in the second week of July was the most powerful combined fleet the world had ever seen. There were forty miles of ships moored in five lines. On July 15th the King reviewed the assembled fleet. In the royal yacht he led the armada out to sea by the Solent, and then anchored while squadron after squadron swept past, saluting with its guns as each ship came abreast of the royal yacht. For the first time at such a review, great airships sailed seawards high over the masts of the leading line. Aeroplanes wheeled high in air like flights of gigantic birds. War on the sea was henceforth to be the combined action of squadrons steaming on the surface, submarines diving beneath it, and airships and seaplanes in the air above. In the fleet which was thus reviewed there were twenty-one Dreadnoughts and super-Dreadnoughts, thirty-seven battleships of the pre-Dreadnought type, eighteen armoured cruisers (nearly all of them so powerful in armament and armour that

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

a few years ago they would have ranked as battleships), over a hundred protected cruisers, and a huge flotilla of torpedo-boat destroyers.

After the review only a small part of the reservists were dismissed, the remainder being retained for training with the fleet. Thus, by a happy chance, when the war crisis suddenly developed, the greater part of the navy was practically on a war footing in the home seas. A few wireless messages directed the squadrons to their war stations. As the danger became more serious, the remaining reservists were called up, and the mobilisation of the fleet was complete in every detail twelve hours before war was declared.

The German navy, under the Tirpitz régime, had developed into a very formidable force. It was permanently organised in two fleets, the "High Sea Fleet," which was kept permanently in commission in the North Sea, and the "Reserve Fleet," one-fourth of which was kept in commission. In the race of naval construction, the Germans had up to the date of the declaration of war completed thirteen Dreadnoughts and four of the new battle-cruisers. The battle-cruisers were attached to the High Sea Fleet, but one of them, the *Goeben*, had been sent to the Mediterranean. All the Dreadnoughts were in the High Sea Fleet. One of them, the *Friedrich der Grosse*, was the flagship. Eight others formed the first squadron, and four the third squadron. The second squadron was formed of eight pre-Dreadnoughts. The main battle line of the High Sea Fleet would thus be formed of twenty-one ships, including all the thirteen Dreadnoughts. To these were attached three battle-cruisers, eight light cruisers, seventy-seven torpedo-boat destroyers, organised in seven squadrons, and twenty-one submarines.

The Reserve Fleet was made up of twelve of the older battleships, grouped in two squadrons, six armoured cruisers, and a number of lighter cruisers, forty-eight torpedo-boat destroyers, and forty-eight small torpedo boats. When the crisis began, the High Sea Fleet was engaged in the annual manœuvres off the coast of Norway. It was at once recalled to German home waters.

The great inferiority in numbers of the German fleet compared to our own made it impossible for it to risk a general engagement at the outset of the war. Long before German naval writers had clearly outlined the policy that would be adopted. For many years Germany had been preparing a fortified base for the operations of its fleet. This base ex-

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

tended from the mouth of the Ems, which forms the boundary between Germany and Holland, eastward to the ports of the Baltic. The two chief naval ports are Kiel on the Baltic, and Wilhelmshaven on the North Sea. The German coast between Holland and Denmark is a tract of low and in many places marshy land, sinking gradually below sea-level, and fringed with a line of islands, between which and the mainland there is a sandy tract, much of which is dry at low water. The channels between the islands are mostly too shallow for any but light-draught ships, but the scour of the river streams and the backwash of the tide, assisted by a certain amount of dredging, keep deep channels open into the Ems, the Jahde, the Weser, and the Elbe. The coast-line has been prepared for defence by batteries on the islands, forts at the river mouths, extensive mine-fields, and the presence of torpedo boats and submarine flotillas.

The island of Heligoland, off the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, forms the advance outpost of this fortified line. The island is a high plateau girt round with cliffs of soft red rock, with a small stretch of lower land and sandy beach at its base on one side. It was ceded by Denmark to England at the end of the eighteenth century. For the hundred years during which it was a British possession it was considered to be of little value. It was used as a pilot station, and in the summer thousands of Germans came from Hamburg and Bremen for the sea-bathing. The people were good sailors, and had a large fishing-fleet. In 1890 Lord Salisbury ceded it to Germany in exchange for certain rights at Zanzibar. In the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury explained that it was a good bargain, for Heligoland was really of no value to us ; he added that the sea was gradually undermining the cliffs, and in process of time the whole place would be washed away.

The Germans had a better appreciation of its possibilities. Four months after the cession, the Kaiser paid a visit to the island, escorted by a naval squadron, and in a speech which he made on landing he said, " This island is destined to be for us a bulwark on the sea, a protection for our German fishermen, a base for our warships, and a stronghold and defence for German waters against any enemy who may venture to show himself upon them."

Even in Germany this was thought at the time to be only a characteristic piece of high-flown rhetoric, but plans were already being prepared to convert the little island into a first-class naval base. The gain of possessing such an

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

advanced base would be that a German squadron could find shelter under the guns of its batteries and behind its mine-fields at a point well out to sea, and without having to traverse the narrow channels that give access through the shoals of the German coasts to the fortified bases of the mainland. It would further be a torpedo station, and later on—though this use was quite unforeseen twenty-four years ago—it became a useful station for wireless telegraphy and an aviation base. Six millions sterling were spent on a new harbour and powerful fortifications. A large proportion of this sum was expended on granite and concrete groining, to defend the sandstone cliffs against the ravages of the sea. Above these stone bulwarks, the cliffs have in places been armoured to prevent the battering fire of hostile guns undermining the fortifications on their summits. The high plateau has been converted into a fortress armed with the most powerful artillery. From the lower ground breakwaters stretching out into the sea enclose a great harbour. Heligoland has become in twenty years one of the most completely equipped naval bases in the world.

Another important engineering work, which added greatly to the resources of the German navy, was completed a few years after the cession of Heligoland. This was the canal connecting Brunsbüttel on the estuary of the Elbe with the naval port of Kiel on the Baltic. This would enable the fleet to operate at will either in the North Sea or the Baltic, the transfer being made in perfect safety through German territory. When the larger types of deep-draught battleships were introduced by our building of the *Dreadnought*, four millions were expended on widening and deepening the Kiel Canal, and at four points on its course huge basins were constructed in which a Dreadnought or a battle-cruiser could be turned. Germany thus possessed, at the outbreak of the war, a secure protection for its fleet behind the batteries of its North Sea base, a fortified advance post for its submarine and torpedo-boat flotillas, and the means of securely sending a naval force into the Baltic, and of withdrawing it again to the North Sea, if a general concentration of the fleet were required.

It is a recognised rule of naval warfare that one must avoid pitting battleships and cruisers against powerful land batteries, or risking them in mine-fields. The German fleet, while it lay in its harbours, was fairly safe against a very superior force.

The policy advocated by German naval writers and adopted by the Berlin Admiralty was, therefore, to keep

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

the battle fleet at its fortified bases during the first period of the war, and to send out into the North Sea submarines, destroyers, and mine-layers in the hope of gradually destroying so many of the British ships that at length the inequality between the opponents would be so far reduced that the battle fleet might come out and risk a general engagement.

This was, of course, a confession of weakness, and the Germans could not hope, even if their policy were successful, to make any very great change in the odds against them for many months. Thus at the very outset of the war, our fleet held the unchallenged command of the sea. Its business was not to secure, but to maintain it.

The commander to whom the direction of the great fleet in the North Sea was confided was Admiral Sir John Jellicoe. Born in 1859, he had entered the navy in 1872. By "bottling up" the German fleet behind its batteries and mine-fields, the fleet, without firing a shot, has gained several important advantages. First of all, as has been already noted, it kept the Channel free for the secure transport of the Expeditionary Force from our shores to France.

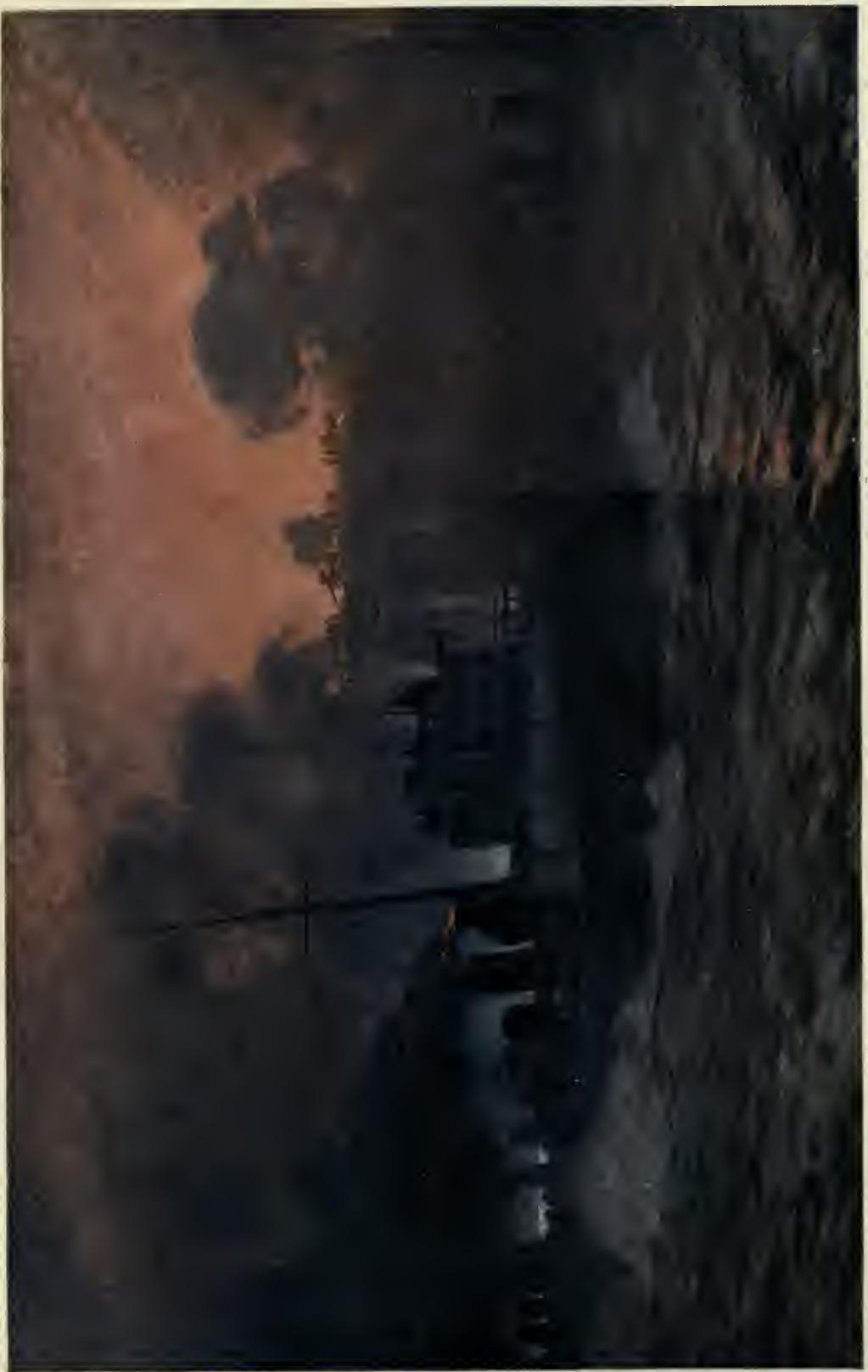
Secondly, it secured the safety of our commerce all over the seas of the world, excepting so far as a few captures might be made here and there by the handful of German cruisers which were outside the North Sea before the war began.

Compared to the great mass of British trading ships, the worst damage these could do would be inconsiderable, and several of them were hunted down in the first days of the war. German commerce was simply swept from the sea. The result was that the main routes were at once safe for our own ships, food supplies came in freely, and there was not the rapid rise of prices which pessimists had predicted as a first result of the war. Finally, thanks to the navy, there was not even a remote danger of a German raid on our shores. The fleet was proving, from the first hour of the war, our "sure shield."

Nevertheless our ships in the North Sea had an arduous task. It was their business to watch the German forts, to form a cordon through which no commerce-raiding cruiser could slip out to sea, to hunt down the German mine-layers, and to watch day and night against attacks of torpedo craft and submarines. The work fell most heavily upon our own torpedo flotillas and light cruisers, which formed the advance watching line, off the Frisian Islands and Heligoland, with a second screen guarding the Baltic entrance by the Cattegat.

Behind, and in support of these lines, lay the heavier

## WATCH AND WARD AT ENGLAND'S DANGER-POINT



*Painted by Donald Maxwell*



## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

cruisers ready to afford the lighter craft immediate support ; and then behind all, " at some place or places unknown," were the great battle-squadrons. By day, our air-craft were scouting high aloft, and early in the war a naval air-base was established at Ostend, from which aeroplanes went to and fro along the North Sea coast.

Wireless telegraphy kept all the ships in constant touch with their squadron commanders and with Admiral Jellicoe's flagship. The same wonderful invention kept the Admiralty in London in constant communication not only with the North Sea fleet, but with every cruiser even in the most distant seas. It was no longer necessary for the battle-fleet to lie in perilous neighbourhood to the enemy's ports. If the German fleet had come out, its movement would have at once been signalled by wireless from the inshore ships to the Admiral, and a few minutes later every ship in the North Sea would have the news and would be moving to its allotted station to intercept the enemy.

The chief danger against which our ships had to guard at the outset arose from the action of the German mine-layers. The laying of explosive mines in the open sea was a new practice in naval warfare. For sixty years mine-fields had been used in the defence of harbours, and the methods of employing them had been gradually brought to great mechanical perfection. But the use of mines anchored or set adrift in the open sea did not begin till the war between Japan and Russia nine years ago. Both Russians and Japanese employed the new weapon very freely. The destruction of the *Petropavlovsk*, while leading the fleet out of Port Arthur, was the work of a Japanese mine. A little later, in one day, two out of the six Japanese battle-ships were sunk by Russian mines in the open sea, and there were a number of minor losses. Even the anchored mine used in this way is a danger to the peaceful trader.

Every one knew that the Germans, having the weaker fleet, would be certain to use mines in the North Sea. The war had not lasted twenty-four hours when the first of the German mine-layers was sunk by one of our torpedo flotillas. In the early morning of August 5th, a trawler off Aldeburgh, on the Suffolk coast, informed the *Amphion*, the light cruiser which was acting as the flagship of the destroyer patrol in this part of the North Sea, that she had seen a big steamer " throwing things overboard " a few miles away. It was at once surmised that this was a German mine-layer at work.

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

The *Amphion* and her pack of destroyers immediately gave chase, and soon came up with the German liner *Königin Luise*, which had been converted into a mine-layer. She refused to obey the signal to lay-to, and tried to get away. But she was sunk by the torpedo-boat destroyer *Lance*, a new ship taken into the navy only a few days before. Most of the enemy's crew were rescued. Next day we had our first naval loss. The *Amphion* was engaged in sweeping up and destroying the mines laid by the *Königin Luise*, when she collided with one of them. A great burst of fire rose round the ship, and she sank in a few minutes. The crew behaved with the traditional steadiness of the service, falling in at their stations and obeying orders as if they were carrying out ordinary manœuvres. A hundred and thirty-one lives were lost.

A few days later the cruiser *Birmingham* sank the German submarine U9 in the North Sea. According to the generally received accounts of the affair, a submarine was seen approaching with only her periscope visible. A single shot from one of the *Birmingham*'s quickfirers smashed the periscope, blinding the submarine, and as the U9 rose to the surface in order to see her way, a second shot smashed her dome and sank her. According to another version, after the submarine had missed the cruiser with the torpedo, the *Birmingham*, making a rapid turn, ran her down.

Though the sinking of the *Königin Luise* showed the Germans that it was a dangerous business to send large mine-layers out into the North Sea, they found other means of laying these deadly appliances at various points off the coasts. Many fishing-boats and a number of small trading craft were destroyed by this means. The Admiralty met the danger by employing a flotilla of east-coast steam trawlers in searching for and fishing up German mines. This service had been provided for more than two years ago, when a number of trawlers were retained for the work in case of war, and given some practical training under naval officers. Sweeping for mines had long been practised in the training of all navies. Originally it was regarded as the means for clearing away a mine-field in attacking a harbour defended in this way. Light craft, such as torpedo boats or steam launches, were set to work in couples, with a steel hawser trailing between them along the bottom, so as to drag the mines from their anchors. By a happy thought it was decided in 1912 to employ in this service some of the North Sea trawlers, hardy

LIBRARY OF  
CALIFORNIA

BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

and daring sailors, who from boyhood have been engaged in working long nets and sweeping the sea-bottom. The trawlers engaged for the service fly the white ensign of the navy, and the names of their skippers now appear in the Navy List. They have carried out their work in the North Sea with equal intrepidity and success. Some of them have lost their lives in this dangerous fishing, but only for their help it would have been impossible for our fleets to carry on their patrol work or our trading craft to venture out into the North Sea. It is thought that the mine-laying on the German side was done by trawlers and coasters disguised by flying neutral flags, and escaping the vigilance of our cruisers, because unless they were caught with their cargo of mines actually on board there would be nothing to show the business in which they were engaged.

For our lighter craft, the smaller cruisers and the destroyer flotillas lying close in to the German coast, there was the strain of ceaseless vigilance by day and night, and the chance at any moment of a brush with one of the enemy's smaller ships. But for the great battle-squadrons lying far out behind this advanced line the first weeks of the war were a time of somewhat monotonous waiting for the hoped-for day of action. Wireless challenges are said to have been sent to the German fleet suggesting they should come out and fight. But Admiral von Ingenohl knew better than to depart from the waiting plan decided upon before the war. After the first fortnight, a seaman on board one of the battleships wrote home to his friends, "If you want a really quiet time, you should be out here with us; no excitement, no worry about the war, and nothing to do." More than once there had been rumours of a naval battle in the North Sea. In the first days of the war especially, from more than one point on the east coast, there came news of heavy firing out at sea. But nothing more serious than gun practice was in progress. The first heavy fighting took place on August 28th off Heligoland, so near in fact to the island that only for the hazy weather the long-ranging guns of its cliff batteries would probably have been brought into action. It had been found that every night a flotilla of destroyers and light cruisers came out from Heligoland, or one of the points behind it, into the North Sea. Their movements were watched by our submarines, and on August 27th it was decided to attack them in the grey of the morning as they were returning. The officer who was entrusted with the execution of this dashing enterprise was one

THE SURE SHIELD

BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

of our younger admirals, Rear-Admiral Beatty, who first won distinction by his brilliant handling of the gunboat flotilla on the Upper Nile during the advance on Khartoum. He was in command of the first cruiser squadron, flying his flag on the battle-cruiser *Lion*. Associated with him in the work were Rear-Admiral Moore, Commodore Goodenough of the first light cruiser squadron, Commodore Keyes the commander of the submarine flotilla, and Commodore Tyrwhitt, who was in charge of the destroyer flotilla, flying his pennant on the *Arethusa*.

It was a dark night on the North Sea, and as the dawn came there were fog and haze drifting over the water. Through the twilight and the mist and over the dangerous mine-sown sea our ships steamed in between the Germans and the land, the light craft leading, the heavy battle-cruisers in support. At the head of the first line of destroyers was the *Arethusa*, a name famous for daring exploits in earlier naval wars. As the haze cleared, it was seen that the flotilla was abeam of the Germans, who were steaming full speed for home less than two miles away. There were some light cruisers and a swarm of torpedo boats on the enemy's side. The *Arethusa* opened fire with her 6-inch quick-firing guns on the leading cruiser, and the firing was taken up by ship after ship on both sides. The first stage of the running fight lasted a little over half an hour. By this time it was evident that the Germans were having the worst of it. The splendidly accurate gunnery of our seamen was telling upon them. Our destroyers were not only rackling the enemy's ships of the same class, but were daringly engaging the enemy's cruisers.

The heavy fire of the Germans had made its mark on some of our ships. There was serious loss on board the *Arethusa*. Lieutenant Westmacott, the second in command, was killed beside the Commodore, and the second lieutenant was wounded. Nigel Barttelot, the lieutenant commanding the *Liberty*, was killed on her bridge, and there were many casualties among the men at the guns; but not one ship in the English line had even a single gun put out of action.

Matters were going hardly with the enemy. Two of the German destroyers were sunk. Several of the cruisers with masts and funnels shot away, guns out of action, and a list that showed they were leaking badly, told of the good gunnery of the English flotilla. Then the great battle-cruisers came into action and the huge shells from their barbette guns

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

told with deadly effect. The cruiser *Mainz*, with one of her three funnels shot away and the smoke rolling low over her decks, seemed to be on fire, but she kept her guns in action till, riddled by the 13·5-inch shells of the *Lion*, she suddenly went down by the bows.<sup>1</sup> Another cruiser of the same class struggled out of the line in a sinking condition, and presently disappeared in the waves. A third steamed towards Heligoland, with her upper works on fire. Our men made gallant attempts to rescue the Germans who were struggling in the water after their ships went down. In at least one instance they were driven off by the fire of one of the enemy's destroyers. But it is possible that, as our Admiralty explained shortly after, the German commander thought our boats meant to board his ship. The German fleet was saved from utter destruction by running under the shelter of the Heligoland batteries. Some hundreds of prisoners were sent into Leith, and amongst them was Lieutenant von Tirpitz, the son of the chief of the German navy.

In all five German vessels were sunk. Of their crews, numbering about 1,200 officers and men, only about 300 were rescued, wounded and unwounded. Some of the wounded died while on their way to England. The total British casualties amounted to 69 killed and wounded.

Compared to our great naval actions, the battle off Heligoland was a small affair, and once the big battle-cruisers came into action, the German fighting power was so outweighed that it was hopeless for the enemy to continue the engagement. But even before this decisive crisis of the fight, the perfect discipline and accurate gunnery of our men had given them the upper hand. Thus the affair might be taken as a precedent of what was likely to happen if the German and British battle fleets met even with equal numbers of the enemy's side. It must have impressed upon Von Tirpitz and Von Ingenohl the utter hopelessness of challenging Admiral Jellicoe to battle in the open sea.

After the battle off Heligoland the German flotillas became more cautious, and for a long time gave us no further chance of closing with them. But the enemy showed great enterprise in his efforts to make the North Sea dangerous with mines and submarines. On September 5th a light cruiser, the *Pathfinder*, was blown up in sight of the Northumberland

<sup>1</sup> An onlooker on board the cruiser *Southampton*, writing of the destruction of the *Mainz*, said, "Her port side was like a sieve. Every gun was smashed. Her whole upper deck was chaos. The forebridge was a tangled mass of iron work, while the wire stays from the foremast were swinging in the air."

## BRITAIN'S SURE SHIELD

coast. It was at first reported that she had collided with a mine. But soon after it was stated that the circumstances pointed to her having been the victim of a submarine attack. The ship was literally blown to pieces and sank immediately. A trawler which witnessed the incident told how she was suddenly enveloped in a great cloud of smoke, and as it cleared there was no trace of her, except some small wreckage adrift on the surface and a number of men struggling in the sea. The trawlers and the men of the lifeboat who put off for the rescue from the neighbouring coast reported that all the floating wreckage, boats, deck gratings, spars, and the like, had been shattered into small pieces by the explosion. There was very heavy loss of life. German reports asserted that the *Pathfinder* was sunk by a submarine, and that submarines had made more than one successful scouting voyage as far north as the Scottish coast. By the beginning of September the Admiralty had to take new steps to meet this danger of submarine attack. At first all the coast lights had been kept burning, but now notice was given that some of them would be extinguished to prevent their being useful to the enemy. Steps were also taken to block some of the channels of the Thames, and after a new exploit of the enemy's submarines, a mine-field was laid in the North Sea in order to reduce the area which had to be watched by our ships. Against this activity of the enemy's submarines, there was a set-off in the efficiency of our own ships of the same class. They made daring scouting excursions close in to the German coasts. Lieutenant Horton blew up the German cruiser *Hela* close to the Frisian shore, and another of our submarines ran into Harwich bringing as prisoners a couple of German aviators, who were taken off a disabled seaplane on which they had been afloat for twenty hours in the North Sea. This capture of flying men by a submarine was an incident that might have come out of one of Jules Verne's novels.

But all the activity of the Germans, with mine and torpedo, had so far resulted only in the destruction of a number of peaceful traders and fishing-boats, and the loss of two British light cruisers. They had done nothing to carry out the programme of diminishing the odds against their battle fleets by damaging or destroying any of our battleships or large cruisers. Admiral Jellicoe's fleet, despite the endless strain of the ceaseless watching for the enemy, held undisputed command of the North Sea, and as on the first day of the war the navy was still "Britain's Sure Shield."



*Painted by F. L. Blanchard, from  
descriptions by eyewitnesses*

**THE FIGHT IN THE HELIGOLAND BIGHT:  
THE LIGHT CRUISER SQUADRON SIGHTING  
THE ENEMY**





*Photo F. J. Mortimer, F.R.P.S.*

**THE EMPIRE'S WATCH-DOGS**  
The Navy ready

THE BRITISH  
FLEET READY FOR SEA



THE BRITISH FLEET READY FOR SEA



Drawn by Frank H. Mason, R.B.A.

"LIGHTS ARE BURNING BRIGHT. ALL'S WELL!"

Shortly after war was declared, the Admiralty announced that all aids to navigation on the east coast of England and Scotland, both by day and night, might be removed at any time without any further warning, but no such step had yet been taken, whereas on the German coast all lights were extinguished and sea-marks removed as soon as war broke out. The silent victory of the British Navy is well summed up in the time-honoured cry of the look-out men at sea: "Lights are burning bright. All's well!"

THE BRITISH  
ADMIRALTY



*Photo Russell & Sons*  
**ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELLIFFE, K.C.B.**



*Photo Topical*

**REAR-ADmiral W. E. MADDEN**



*Photo Russell & Sons*

**VICE-ADMIRAL SIR DAVID BEATTY**

OFFICERS OF  
ADMIRAL'S DIVISION



*Photo Russell & Sons*

**REAR-ADmiral A. G. MOORE**



*Photo Russell & Sons*

**COMMANDER W. E. GOODENOUGH**



*Photo Kirk & Sons, Cowes*

**REAR-ADmiral A. H. CHRISTIAN**



*Photo Heath*

**COMMODORE R. Y. TYRWHITT**

THE  
ADMIRALTY



Drawn by Arthur Garratt

THE NERVE-CENTRE OF THE NAVY

The wireless installation on the roof of the Admiralty  
in touch with the British Fleet



*Drawn by Oscar Parkes*

HURRYING ON THE COMPLETION OF THE "KÖNIG,"  
A GERMAN DREADNOUGHT AT WILHELMSHAVEN  
Russia has also four Dreadnoughts now nearing completion

# THE BRITISH ADMIRALTY



Photo Topical

H.M.S. BIRMINGHAM

The light cruiser which sank submarine *U* 15, H.M.S. *Birmingham*, and her commander, Commander Goodenough

The German Fleet in the North Sea assumed the offensive on Sunday, when one of our cruiser squadrons was attacked by a German submarine flotilla. None of our ships was damaged, but one of the enemy's submarines, *U* 15, was sunk by H.M.S. *Birmingham*, attached to the First Light Cruiser Squadron. Only two shots were fired. The first shot shattered the periscope, blinding the submarine and forcing her to come to the surface. No sooner was the conning-tower visible than another well-directed shot took the whole upper structure clean out of the submarine, and she sank like a stone.



Photo M. & F.

COMMANDER GOODENOUGH



*Drawn by A. G. Swanwick*

H.M.S. "KENNET" CHASING A GERMAN  
TORPEDO BOAT OFF TSINGTAU



#### MINE-SWEEPING AT SEA

This dangerous duty is largely performed by trawlers for the British fleet



THE HEAVIEST LOSS IN THE MERCHANT SERVICE  
The sinking of the *Kaipara* by the *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*



*Drawn by R. Cooper*

BRITISH TRANSPORT CARRYING  
TROOPS ACROSS TO FRANCE



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

GERMANY'S MENACE TO NEUTRALS  
A trawler blown up by a mine



Drawn by Oscar Parkes, with the assistance of a survivor

DESTROYED BY A  
GERMAN SUBMARINE  
H.M.S. Pathfinder settling down  
The Pathfinder was torpedoed on September 5,  
about 20 miles off the east coast, with a loss  
of 259 lives

ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR  
CONTRABAND  
An incident in the  
English Channel during  
hostilities



\*Drawn by H. G. Swannick from information supplied by an officer of the steamer



*Drawn by E. E. Hodgson*



FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE  
The Indian Expeditionary Force at sea



Drawn by E. E. Hodgson

SAVED BY A SUBMARINE  
A romance of the engagement off Heligoland



*Photo E. N. A.*

**ADMIRAL VON TIRPITZ**  
Secretary of State to the German Navy



*Photo Topical*

**VICE-ADMIRAL INGENOHL**  
Commander of the German High Seas Fleet

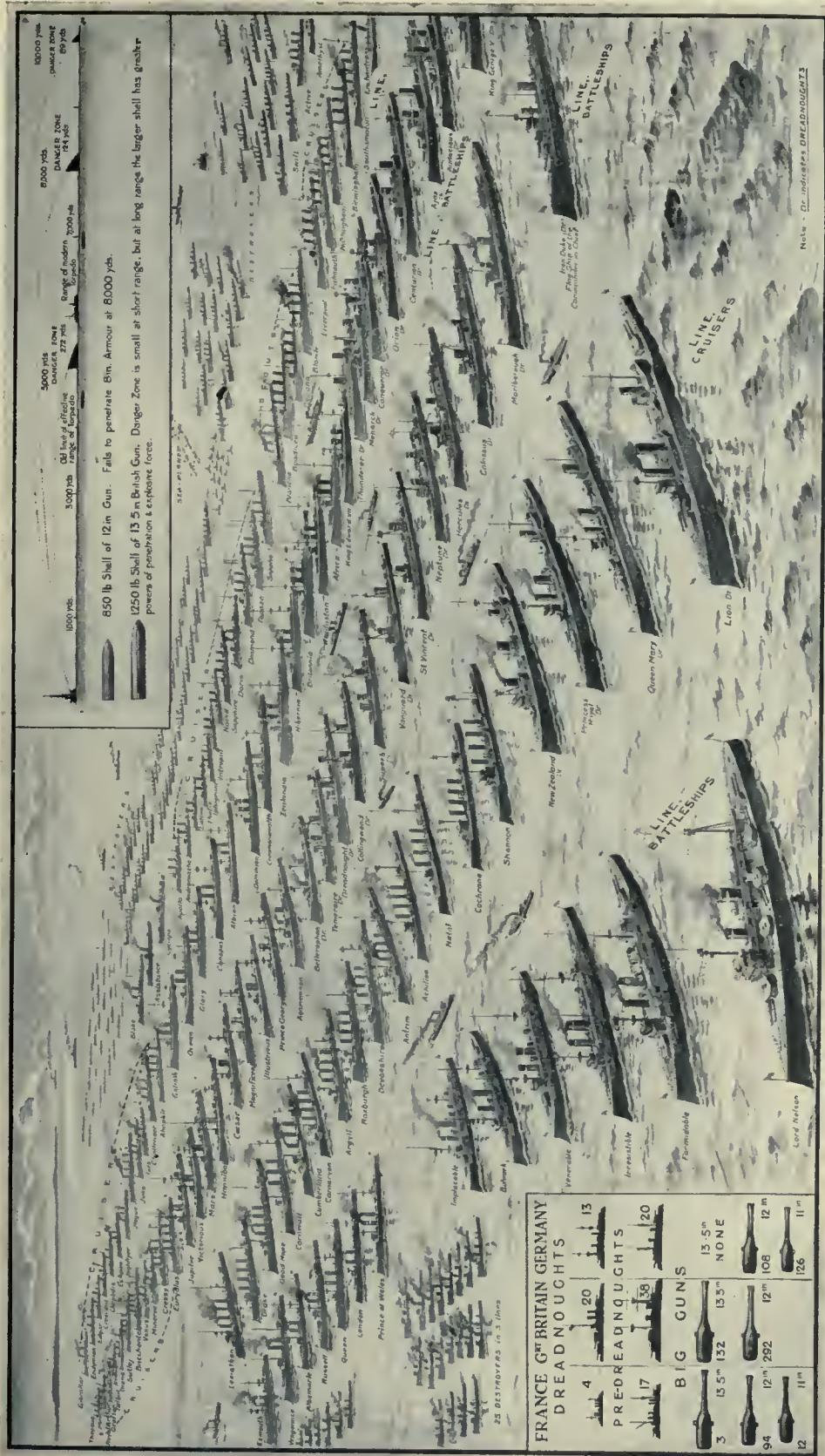
**AFTER THE BATTLE**

A cruiser as seen at Harwich by our artist

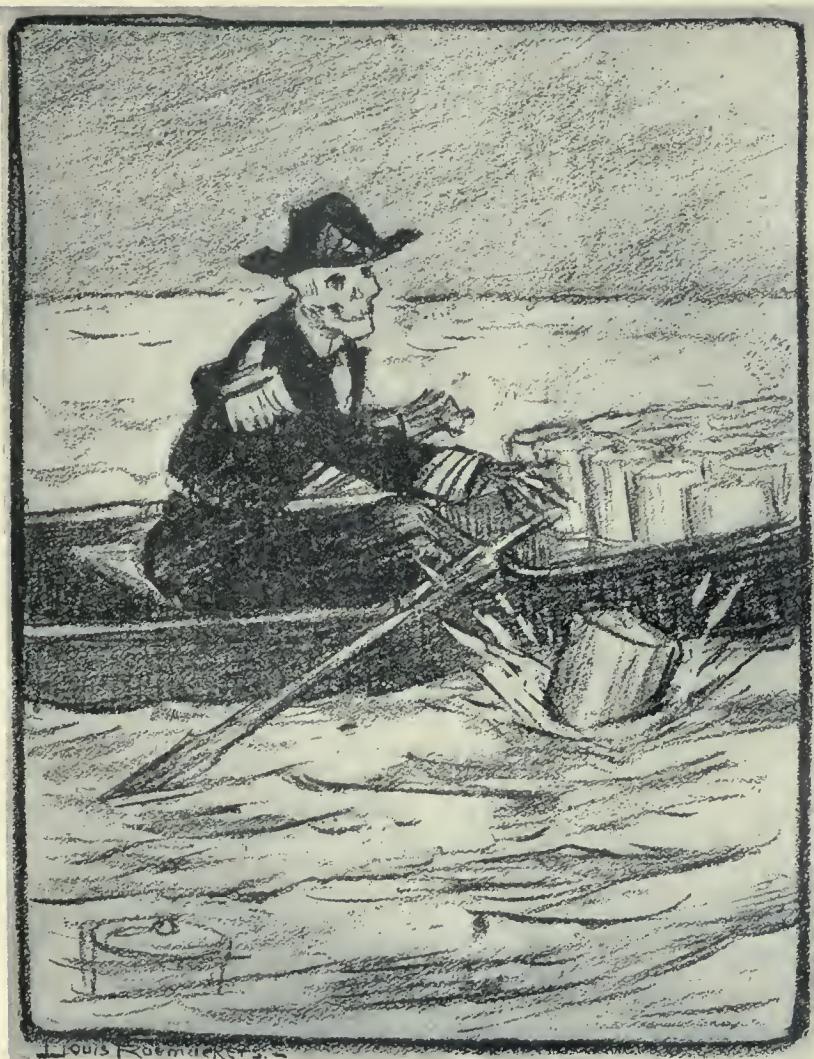
*Drawn by F. L. Blanchard*



THE BRITISH NAVY



A diagram showing every warship at Britain's disposal. A remarkable feature of the onset of war was that Germany forced at a moment when the greatest number of British ships ever brought together were in home waters. Germany was aware of this, for the Great Armada assembled at Spithead on July 15 for inspection by the King. It included, amongst other vessels, 21 Dreadnoughts,<sup>37</sup> the bottom corner is a comparison of armoured cruisers, and over 100 protected cruisers. In the top corner the range of gun strength of Great Britain, France and Germany, and in the bottom corner the range



Drawn by Louis Raemaekers, the Dutch cartoonist

THE GERMAN FLEET SAILS FROM HELIGOLAND

## IV

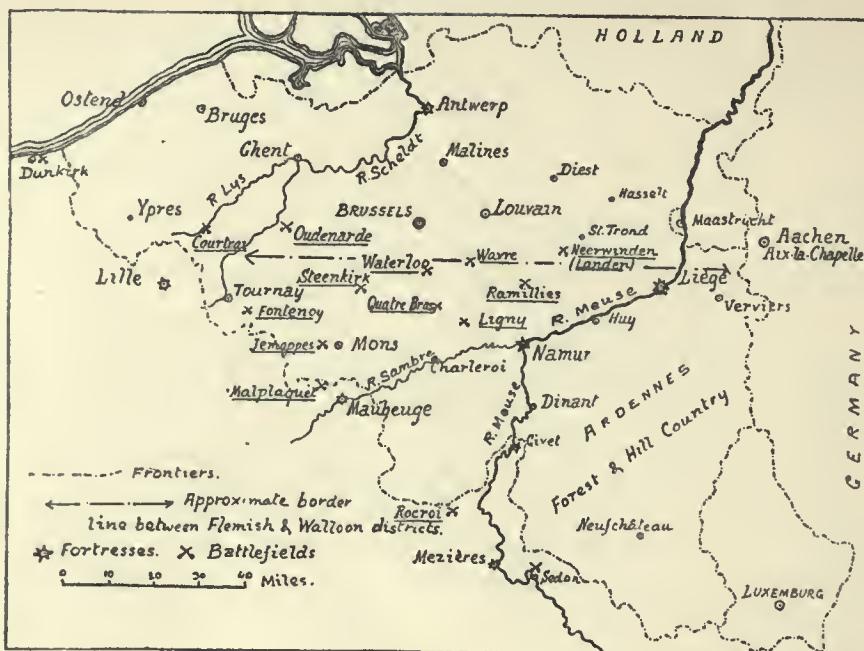
### THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

No land in northern Europe has been more frequently the scene of war than Belgium. Leaving earlier conflicts out of account, and taking note only of the great wars of the last three hundred years, we find that in each succeeding century battles, on which the fate of other nations depended, have again and again been fought out upon this Belgian ground. By a strange irony of fate it has generally been some quarrel amongst other states that has brought the scourge of war upon the quiet, peace-loving burghers and farmers of this homely land of well-tilled fields and quaint old-world towns and cities.

In the days of Spanish and Austrian rule a dispute between France and the houses of Burgundy and Hapsburg inevitably led to war in Flanders. Belgium was the "cockpit of Europe," where the foreign armies were matched against each other. It was the theatre of prolonged war when Louis XIV was striving to make himself the overlord of Europe. The struggle began with French victories under Condé, and ended with French defeats at the hands of Marlborough.

Belgium saw hard fighting again in the later wars of the eighteenth century. The first victories of the French Republic were won on its battlefields. It was the scene of the last disastrous campaign of Napoleon and the crowning victory of Wellington at Waterloo, where Briton and German, now ranged in opposite camps, fought as good comrades against France. When we think of Waterloo, the name brings up the picture of the famous fight of June 18th, 1815, with the French horsemen raging round the "rocky squares," Hougoumont holding out desperately in a storm of fire, the Prussians coming up on the French flank and the Old Guard marching bravely to defeat as the sun went down. But it is characteristic of this Belgian "cockpit of Europe" that this was the third engagement fought on this very ground.

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE



SKETCH MAP OF BELGIUM

In Marlborough's wars there was a cavalry encounter near Waterloo, and during the French Invasion in Belgium in 1794 on July 9th a Republican army under Lefebvre drove an Austrian army from the same ridge of Mont St. Jean that Wellington's redcoats held so stubbornly twenty-one years later.<sup>1</sup>

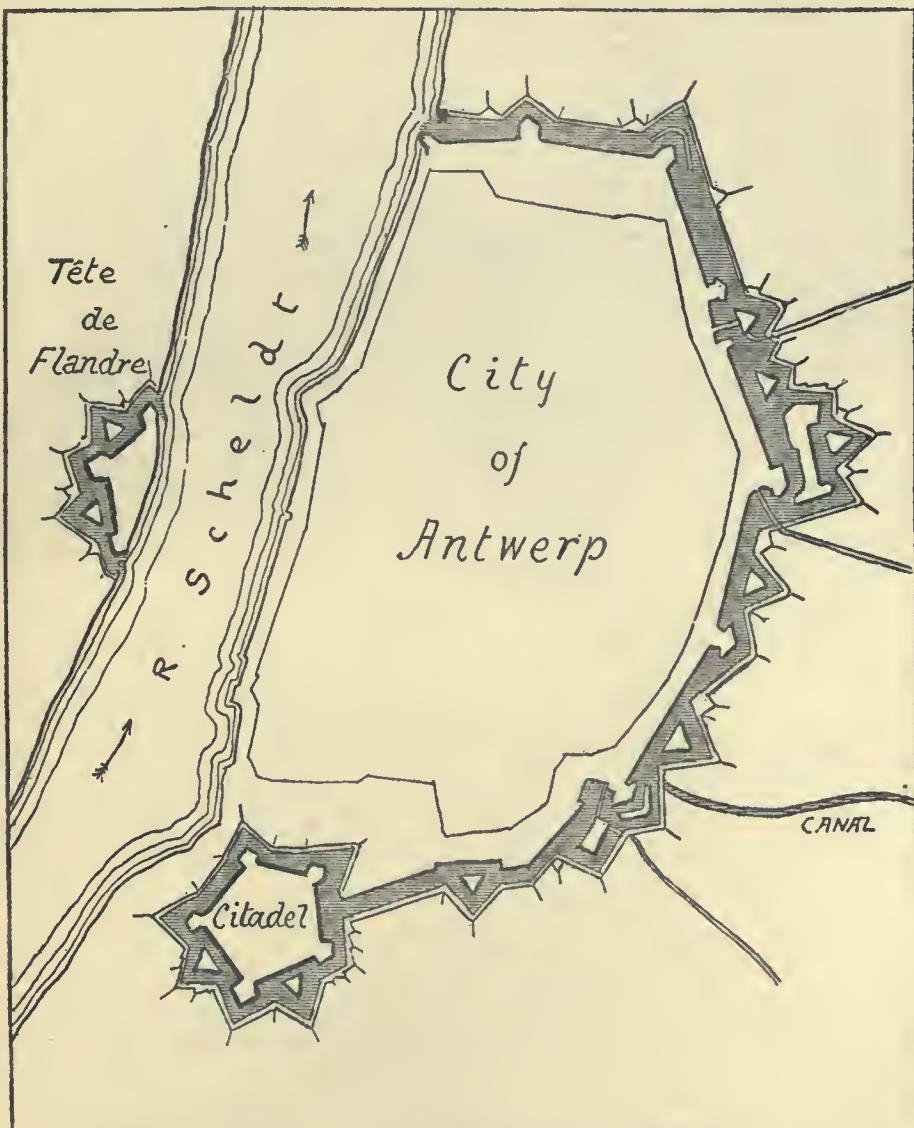
Many another Belgian village has given its name to an historic battle. To reckon up only a few of these, Neerwinden, Landen, Steenkirk, Ramillies, Oudenarde, Fontenoy, Jemappes, Fleurus, Ligny, and Quatre Bras are all on Belgian ground. Malplaquet and Rocroi are just beyond the frontier. There is hardly a town or city but has its record of siege and bombardment. Namur, Liège, Dinant and Huy, Mons and Tournai, Ghent and Bruges, and Antwerp have all been besieged again and again.

Belgium became an independent State some sixty years ago, with its independence and neutrality guaranteed by the great Powers of Europe. But the Belgians realised that they must not depend entirely upon the guarantees of other nations,

<sup>1</sup> By a curious coincidence Marshal Soult, who acted as Napoleon's chief of the staff at Waterloo in 1815, held the same position under Lefebvre in 1794.

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

but must be prepared to defend their independence and neutrality, and at the very least to keep their flag flying until their friends could come to their help. A Belgian soldier, General Brialmont, the greatest military engineer of the nineteenth century, after some years of controversy and debate, fortified Antwerp as the citadel of the kingdom. With something like prophetic insight he said it would be the entrenched camp where the Belgians could, in the last resort,

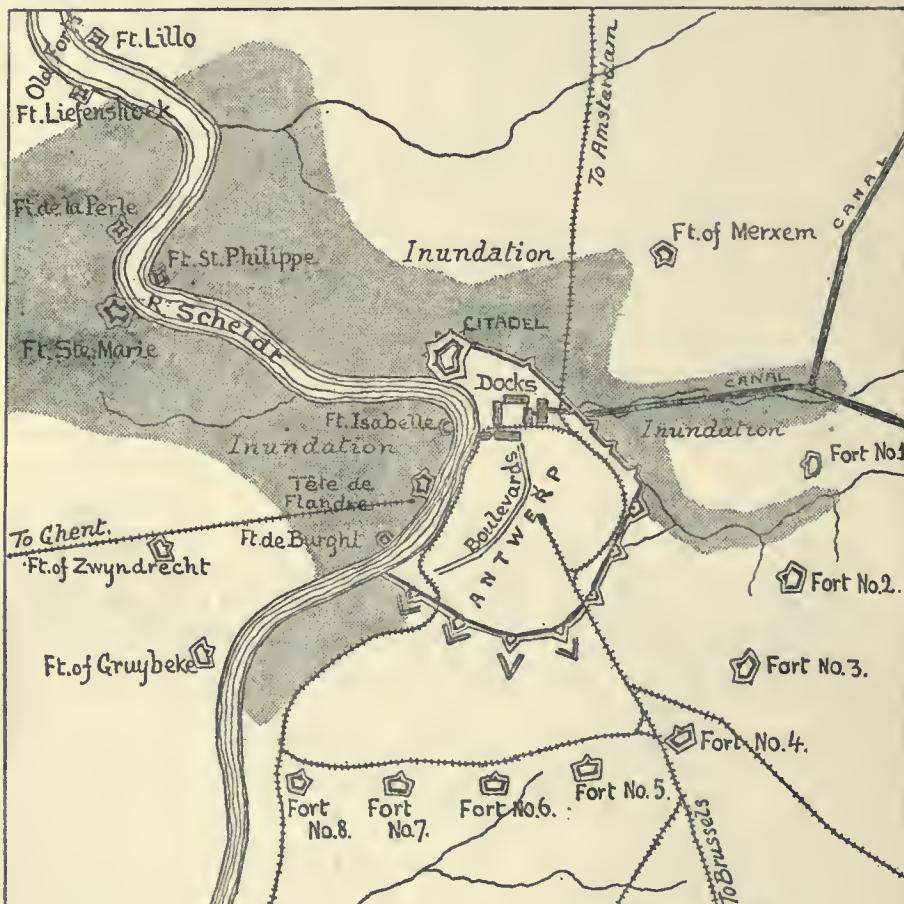


ANTWERP: (1) THE OLD SPANISH FORTRESS

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

rally in defence of their national existence, and then with the aid of their friends—and first among these he counted England—begin the reconquest of their territory.

The old Spanish ramparts and Alva's citadel were demolished. The ramparts were replaced by wide boulevards. A new line of works was erected at a distance that it was



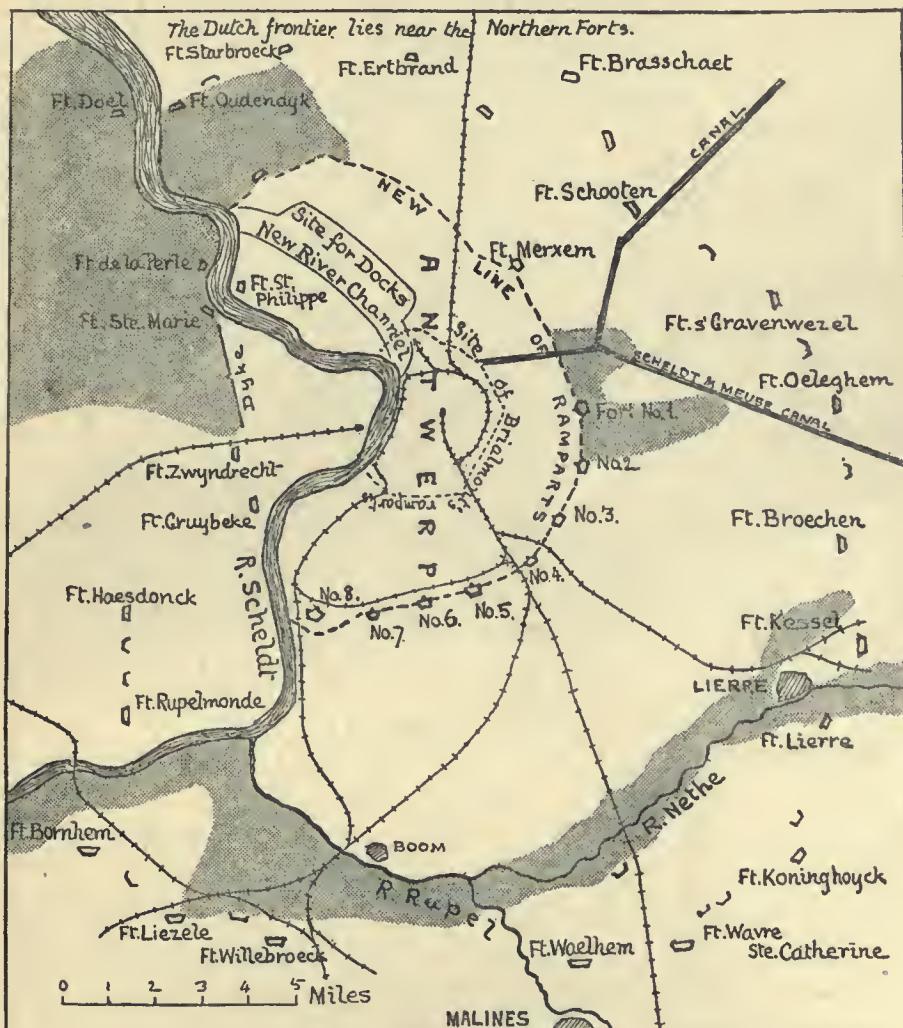
**ANTWERP: (2) BRIALMONT'S FORTIFICATIONS**

The shade shows the extent of the defensive inundations

thought would give ample room for the growth of the city, and still further out a girdle of strong forts was constructed to protect it from distant bombardments. Wide inundations on the north and east would further guard the fortress, and advanced forts were erected near Lierre and on the Rupel to delay the approach of an invader.

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

Brialmont's fortifications were remodelled a few years ago. The work begun in 1905 is not yet quite complete. The growth of the city made even his far-flung rampart line

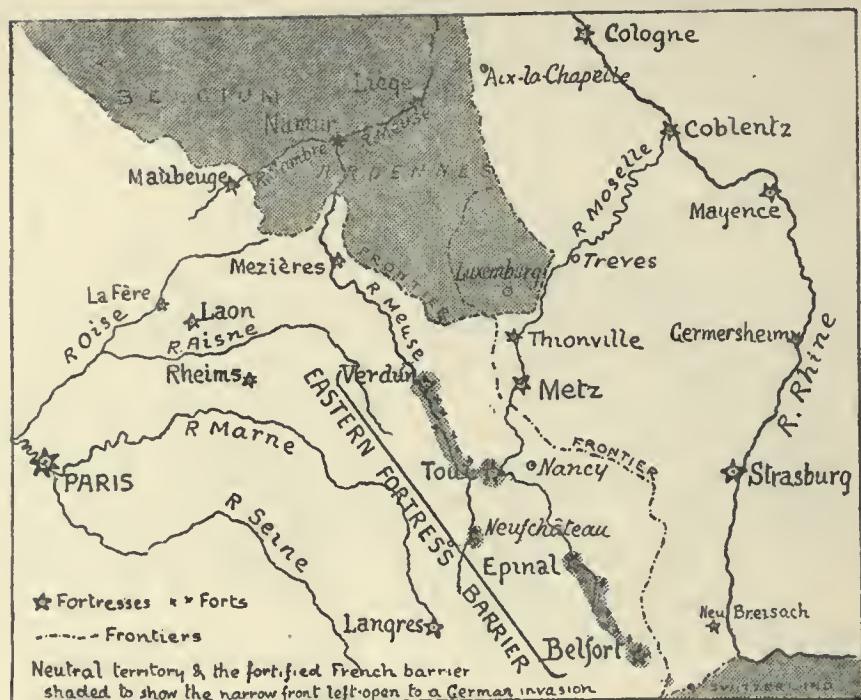


### ANTWERP: (3) THE NEW FORTIFICATIONS AND HARBOUR WORKS

The shade marks extent of defence inundations  
Batteries between the outer forts are marked but not named

an embarrassment. His citadel on the north side of the fortress stood just on ground which was needed for a great scheme for a new port. So the work was begun of making Antwerp into a great "fortified region." The course of the

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE



SKETCH MAP OF THE FRENCH AND GERMAN FRONTIER REGIONS

Scheldt below the city was to be straightened out. New docks were to be constructed along the channel thus opened. The ramparts were at once to be levelled, and a new line of defences constructed, to include several of Brialmont's forts among its bastions. And a new line of forts was begun extending northward to near the Dutch border, southward close up to Malines, with a covering line of inundations along the rivers Rupel and Nethe. Two years ago the ironworks of Belgium received contracts for no less than two hundred armoured turrets for the gun positions of the new forts of Antwerp.

But before this reconstruction had begun it had been recognised that to protect the neutrality of Belgium there must be other fortresses on the Meuse. The danger was no longer from France. It was indeed a danger created by the disaster that befell France in the war of 1870-71.

Germany had annexed Alsace-Lorraine. Strasburg and Metz, the old frontier fortresses of France, had passed into her hands. So France with her eastern borders left open to attack created the new fortress barrier of the east, Verdun and Toul,

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

Epinal and Belfort, with their intervening lines of forts. And students of war at once pointed out that in a future conflict between France and Germany it was all but inevitable that the German armies would try to work round this strong barrier of fortress and fort by a march down the Meuse valley through Belgian territory.

So Brialmont, the creator of the Antwerp fortifications, was called upon to erect such a barrier in the Meuse valley as would at least delay a hostile advance on this side. Round Liège and Namur he erected his forts, with their guns mounted and in armoured turrets, surrounded by a mass of concrete, under which were the quarters of the garrison, the magazines, the engines for raising and revolving the turrets, the ammunition hoists, the electric dynamos for providing light and working the ventilating fans. They were supposed to be the strongest forts in Europe. Five years ago a German general, writing on the armaments of his country, noted that its siege train possessed no gun that could seriously damage a Brialmont fort, but added that this was a deficiency that must be supplied.

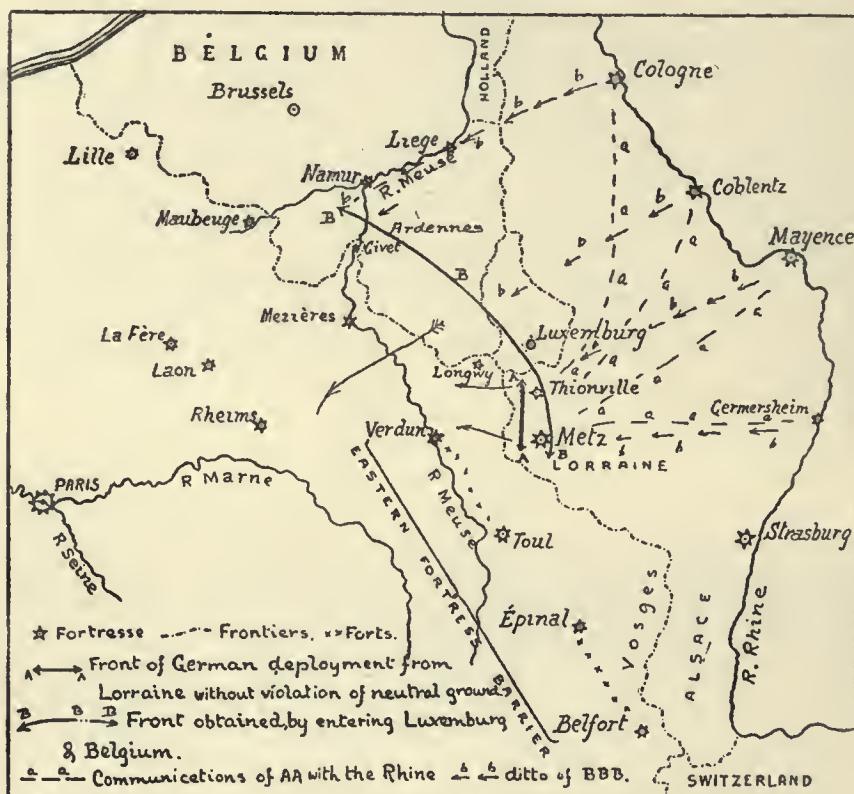
But Brialmont never imagined that forts alone could stop an invader. It is men not machines that win battles. The forts were to be at most the prepared artillery positions of a fighting line of men. So Belgium reorganised and increased her army. The heir to the crown, now King Albert of Belgium, was one of the most zealous promoters of this reorganisation and did much to improve the efficiency of the army which he has led so gallantly in battle. King Albert is a many-sided man, and thorough in everything he touches. Belgium was happy in having such a leader in her hour of trial. He and the men who governed Belgium with him might have averted the scourge of war by opening a free path for the invaders of France. In doing so they would have sacrificed the independence of their country. Regardless of all danger and suffering they gave without hesitation the answer that Belgium would defend herself.

The Belgian mobilisation had already begun before the German ultimatum was received. Belgium being a small Power could mobilise without any fear of its action accentuating the crisis, but the concentration of the army had only begun when the Germans crossed the frontier.

For some twenty years German and French military writers had recognised that it was extremely probable that Germany would begin a war with France by marching through

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

Luxemburg and Belgian territory in order to turn the line of the eastern French fortresses and secure a broad front for the advance of the enormous masses concentrated for the campaign. Had the advance been made only from the frontier of Lorraine from Metz and Thionville into the narrow gap between Verdun and the neutral frontiers, five or six army corps would have been strung out behind each other on



SKETCH MAP SHOWING STRATEGICAL SITUATION  
ON N.E. FRONTIER OF FRANCE

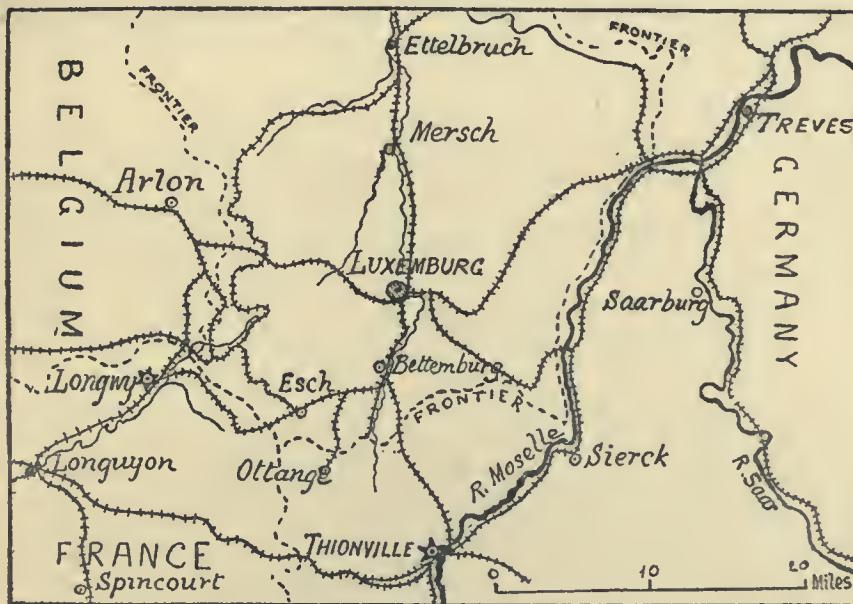
single lines of road, and the columns would have been hundreds of miles long. It would be easy to quote from the military literature of recent years passages that would read, in the light of recent events, like predictions of the opening moves of the war. But strange to say, though these forecasts were the common knowledge of all who had studied the problem of the military situation on the Franco-German frontier, the viola-

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

tion of the territory of Luxemburg and Belgium came like something of a surprise to the public.

The Grand Duchy of Luxemburg has been since 1867 a neutralised State without any means of defence. The treaties which regulate its position provided that the old fortifications of the city should be demolished, and the only force kept under arms by the Grand Duchy should be a few hundred gendarmes and Custom House guards. Its position was, therefore, that of disarmed neutrality protected only by the good faith of the neighbouring States. The city of Luxemburg is an important strategical point, as it is the place where a whole network of railways communicating with Germany, France, and Belgium form a junction. Several of these lines were constructed and owned by German capitalists. Although the fortifications of the place were partly demolished after 1867, the natural strength of the position and the remains of the old works make it easy to convert the city in a few weeks into a great fortress.

Early on Sunday morning, August 2nd, the news arrived that a German force from Thionville had crossed the frontier of the Grand Duchy. Defence was impossible, only a protest could be made. The Grand Duchess, Marie Adelaide, who succeeded to the sovereignty of the little State two years ago



RAILWAY SYSTEM OF LUXEMBURG

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

at the age of eighteen, drove out in a motor car to the bridge leading to the city, accompanied by one of the Ministers of State, to await the arrival of the invaders. They soon appeared, a detachment of officers and men of the 29th German Infantry, conveyed in a long column of motor cars. The Princess had placed her car across the road so as to bar the narrow way, and to her inquiry as to what was meant by this invasion of her State, a German Staff officer replied that the troops had come only to secure a peaceful passage of the army through Luxemburg territory, that no harm would be done to person or property, and that everything required would be paid for. The Princess made a formal protest, and refused to leave the bridge until her chauffeur was forced by threats to turn the car and clear the way. "You had better go quietly home," said the German colonel to the lady, as he started his car, and the detachment dashed on into the city. By evening a German brigade was in possession, and the military authorities had taken possession of the Luxemburg railway and telegraph lines. By this stroke they had obtained the use of the excellent system of roads and railways leading from North Germany through the Grand Duchy to French territory.

The invasion of Belgium began two days later, on the morning of Tuesday, August 4th, the same day on which the English ultimatum was sent to Berlin. The troops employed in the operation came partly from Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), partly from the camp at Malmedy on the Belgian frontier, north-east of Liège. The camp at Malmedy was a training station for several army corps, a permanent camp of manœuvres—a kind of Aldershot for north-western Germany. There was always a considerable force stationed there, and its existence was a cause of considerable anxiety to Belgium. Nevertheless, about three years ago the Belgian Government was persuaded, on the plea of improving commercial facilities, to consent to a tunnelled and branched railway line being made to connect the German railway at Malmedy with the Belgian railway system at the frontier village of Stavelot.

A column from Malmedy seized Stavelot and advanced upon Liège from the south-eastward. A second column from Aachen passed the frontier near Limburg and occupied Verviers, continuing its march from the eastwards towards Liège next day. At the outset, the invaders tried to make friends with the Belgian population. The commander of the vanguard which entered Verviers issued a proclamation to the inhabi-

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

tants reminding them that Belgians and Germans were old friends who had fought side by side at Waterloo, and assuring them that life and property would be safe, and that anything the soldiers might require would be paid for in hard cash. The Belgian Government had withdrawn all its frontier guards, and issued proclamations warning the people that mere civilians should not engage in any acts of hostility against the Germans, as these would be useless and would only provoke reprisals. Two days before, on the Sunday morning in all the village churches, the priests had addressed the same warning to their flocks. The occupation of the frontier districts was therefore quite peaceful, but there was so much alarm amongst the population, which for sixty years had believed that war in Belgium was impossible, that when the news came of the invasion a flight began from towns and villages—a movement by road and rail into Holland or westward towards Brussels.

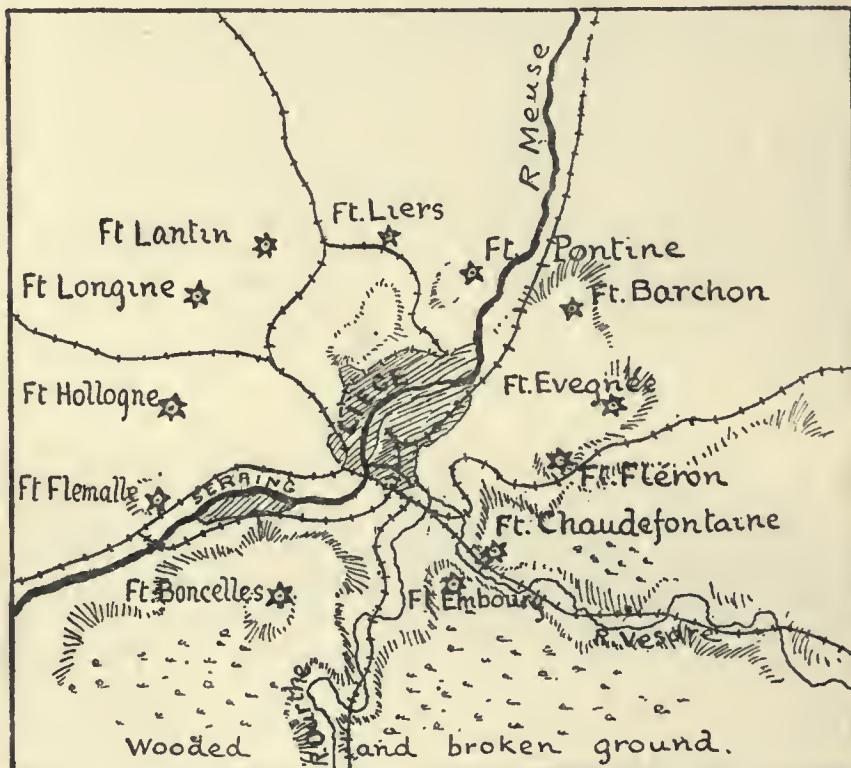
The German army was still in process of mobilisation. The force sent across the frontier was made up of regiments still on the peace footing which received their reservists by rail some days later. The troops were six brigades of infantry, drawn from the 7th (Westphalian) Army Corps, the 9th (Schleswig-Holstein) Corps, and the 10th (Hanoverian) Corps, with strong contingents of cavalry and artillery. The total force would be about 36,000 men, commanded by General von Emmich, a veteran of the war of 1870. It was the vanguard of the invasion.

The Belgian army under the command of King Albert was concentrating along the line of the river Dyle, east of Brussels, with the royal headquarters at the university town of Louvain. Parties of engineers were set to work that same day to destroy the railways through the Belgian Ardennes. Tunnels, bridges, and viaducts were blown up to make the lines useless to invaders. Hurried preparations were being made to place the forts of Liège and Namur in a state of defence. The wooden barracks in which the small garrisons lived near the forts were burned, trees were cut down to clear a field of fire for the guns, though the time was so short that very little was done in this way. Lines of sheltered trenches for infantry were dug between the forts. These preparations caused something like a panic among the civilian population, and every train that left Liège for Brussels was crowded.

The alarm increased when on the Wednesday morning (August 5th) the sound of firing was heard north of Liège.

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

There was hard fighting with a detachment of Belgian troops guarding the crossing of the Meuse at the little town of Visé. The German shells set fire to the place, and the cloud of black smoke drifting along the river told those who watched from the high ground near Liège that war was bringing destruction to Belgian homes. After a sharp fight in the houses and along the river banks, the Belgians retired, and the Germans began to cross the Meuse.



FORTS AND RAILWAY JUNCTIONS OF LIÈGE

It was not until after dark next day that Liège itself was attacked. The move across the river at Visé suggested that the attack would be made from the northward, but it began on the other side along the wooded heights through which the little river Ourthe runs down from the wooded Ardennes to the Meuse. The forts and trenches had been manned and cavalry scouts had reported the presence of the enemy on the hills, but no fighting was expected until daylight. At half-past eleven in the evening heavy firing began to the south-

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

ward, and shells came screaming through the night over the woods, and bursting on and around the southern forts of Fléron, Embourg, and Boncelles. The shooting of the German gunners was remarkably accurate. They were firing in the dark at a range of nearly three miles at targets screened by the woods and hidden in the night. The firing must have been done entirely by the map, the position of the batteries being carefully marked off on a large-scale plan, the direction and distance of the forts ascertained from it, and the laying and elevation of the guns thus ascertained. The shells were fired from heavy field guns and howitzers. They were loaded with some high explosive and burst on striking with a bright greenish flash and with very damaging effect.

The bombardment of the forts went on for nearly three hours. Towards 3 a.m., while it was still dark, there was a rattle of infantry fire in the woods on both sides of the Ourthe. The Germans were advancing to attack the line of defence between the forts of Boncelles and Embourg. Parties of Belgians thrown forward into the bush delayed them for a while, but gradually cleared their front, falling back on the forts and leaving the defence to the Belgian infantry (the 9th and 14th of the line) who held the trenches on this side.

The first light of the dawn was coming as the German firing lines pushed up to the trenches. The attack was probably an experiment. The German Staff had not a high opinion of the Belgian troops, and probably this advance in the grey of the dawn was made in the hope that the defence would collapse at the first pressure and Liège would be rushed. All the while bombardment of the forts continued, the shells bursting to right and left of the Belgian infantry line. But the men in the trenches stood fast and shot well. Again and again the Hanoverian infantry were driven back, and once at least the 9th Belgian regiment charged out of the trenches and drove the Germans into the woods.

For more than two hours the fight continued, the German attack gradually spreading out to right and left between the Ourthe and the Meuse in one direction, and towards the valley of the Vesdre in the other. But everywhere the Belgians held their own. The Germans were discovering that they had to deal with a resolute enemy. About five o'clock the attack scored its first success. The heavy guns at Fort Fléron became suddenly silent: a shell bursting on the turret on which they were mounted put the gear that moved it out of order, and the guns could no longer be worked. It was a

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

first warning that against high explosive shells the forts were vulnerable.

About an hour later the Germans gave up their attempt to rush the position. The artillery ceased firing. The Belgians felt that they had won a first victory. But though they had every reason to be satisfied with their success and in this, their first battle, had proved they were steady and reliable soldiers, there is no doubt that, as has been already said, the German attack was largely an experiment to see if the defence would collapse on the first challenge, and finding that the Belgians could not be thus easily brushed aside, Von Emmich proceeded to a methodical attack on the forts. More guns were brought up, and later in the morning the bombardment from the southern hills began again. Perhaps by accident, perhaps on purpose, a few shells flew over the southern forts and burst in the city. Not much damage was done. In all, not more than twenty houses were struck, and there was no loss of life. The bombardment continued into the night. Now and then a shell burst in the streets, and most of the people slept in their cellars.

During the day there had been a momentary scare in the city. A party of German horsemen suddenly appeared in one of the streets and made a dash for the headquarters of General Leman, the military Commandant of Liège. They had slipped through some unguarded point on the long line of defence. There was no guard on duty at the headquarters. The General narrowly escaped capture, and the daring riders galloped out of the place unmolested. This singular incident shows that Liège had a garrison far too weak to hold the long line of outlying defences marked by its circle of forts. An adequate garrison would have numbered about 30,000 men. There was not one-fifth of this force in Liège.

The whole available army of Belgium at this time amounted to about 120,000 men. To have locked one-fourth of it up behind the Liège forts and provide another garrison for Namur would be to fritter away nearly half the field army. During the night between the 6th and 7th, King Albert and the Belgian Staff decided to withdraw the infantry brigade from Liège, leaving it to General Leman to hold the forts as long as possible. These required only small garrisons, about a couple of thousand men in all, and as long as they were intact the enemy would not be able to use the railways of the Meuse valley. It was hoped before they were reduced the Belgians and their allies would advance to the relief of the place.

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

After an anxious night disturbed by the thunder of the bombardment and the occasional bursting of a long-ranging shell in the streets, the citizens of Liège awoke to hear the news that the greater part of the garrison was moving out by road and rail to join the Belgian field army, and that negotiations had been begun for the peaceful occupation of the city by the enemy. Before they withdrew, the Belgian engineers blew up the Pont des Arches, the principal bridge of the city across the Meuse. The Archbishop, the Burgomaster, and some of the leading citizens met Von Emmich's Staff officers under a flag of truce, and at noon the Germans marched in. There was no disturbance of order. A battery of artillery was placed in front of the Town Hall and parties of infantry with machine guns in some of the chief streets. As the regiments broke off the men crowded into the shops to buy tobacco, chocolate, and the like, paying for everything with German money. While the place was being occupied, the firing on the forts had ceased. General Leman and his Staff had taken up their headquarters in one of the northern works.

The occupation of Liège was announced the same day in Berlin as a great German victory. For some time the event was unknown in England, and it was supposed that the "capture of Liège" was a piece of false news invented by the Berlin War Office. This view seemed to be confirmed by the fact that for a week after there came from Maestricht the news that thunder of a heavy cannonade could be heard in the direction of Liège.

The forts were being bombarded and reduced one by one. The Germans had brought up a new weapon, huge siege howitzers dragged along the roads by traction engines and mounted on concrete beds. The calibre of the new weapon was  $16\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and it threw a shell weighing nearly a ton, a flying mine loaded with a charge of a high explosive, said to be picric powder. The explosion shattered the 12-foot beds of concrete around the turrets of the forts, crushed the turrets themselves or flung them bodily from their foundations, and the fumes of each explosion penetrating into the forts had a suffocating effect on the garrison. Fort after fort was reduced to a mere heap of wreckage. Two of them were blown up by the shells penetrating their magazines. As General Leman was approaching one of the forts thus destroyed, he was stunned by the explosion, and when he became conscious again found himself a prisoner in the hands of the Germans. When several of the forts had been thus

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

destroyed, the few that were left surrendered. The rapid, methodical demolition of the Liège forts, supposed to be the strongest in Europe, was one of the surprises of the war.

While the Germans were engaged in the reduction of the Liège forts, their armies were concentrating in great masses in Lorraine and Luxemburg, moving up to the crossings of the Meuse, between Liège and the Dutch frontier, and pushing along the south bank of the river below Liège to seize the crossing at Huy. The multitudes of armed men were assembling that were soon to flood the greater part of Belgium.

The first wave of this human tide was the advance of the cavalry across the Meuse supported by motor cars conveying infantry and machine guns; the German horsemen moved westward on a broad front across the undulating uplands of the Hesbaye district between the Meuse and the Dyle. On Sunday, August 9th, Tongres was occupied. Strange to say, though the townsfolk were within hearing of the guns of Liège, the occupation came as a surprise. The people were coming out of their churches after Mass when there was a sudden cry that the Germans were coming, and a squadron of Lancers trotted into the main street. They were the 35th Uhlans, and they told the people they had come all the way from Dantzig, at the other end of Germany. A cavalry division, nearly 4,000 men, made its headquarters in the town. The people soon recovered from their panic, for the Germans behaved well, and contented themselves with seizing the money and letters at the post office and requisitioning some food. The invasion was still in its first stage, and the German commanders were anxious to spare the people as much as possible.

A screen of cavalry patrols flung westward from Tongres and Liège swept the country, and soon came in contact with parties of Belgian Lancers and detachments of infantry. There was skirmishing on a wide front, and the prompt withdrawal of small parties of Germans when they came in contact with Belgian riflemen, and the occasional capture of a scout who had lost his way and emptied his haversack, led to exaggerated reports that the enemy were everywhere being defeated and their men were in a starving condition. "One doesn't want a rifle to catch those Germans," said a jocular Belgian scout; "they surrender if one holds out a piece of bread and butter."

The Belgian army was reported on this day to be in line

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

along the river Dyle, extending its right southward in the hope of the early arrival of the French across the Sambre. There were also rumours that the English were coming. Even the appearance of an English tourist in a motor car, with a little Union Jack flying from it, was taken to herald the arrival of the hoped-for assistance. French Staff officers at Brussels received an enthusiastic welcome from the crowd, and their appearance was taken to be a proof that the French army was crossing the Sambre. But in the first stage of the campaign the Belgians had to fight all unaided. With a grand spirit of trust in the ultimate help of their allies, they nevertheless presented a bold front to the invasion, and sacrificed their country in order to delay its progress and gain time for the concentration of the allied armies.

On Wednesday, the 12th, the German cavalry screen extended from Hasselt through St. Trond to Huy on the Meuse, where the bridge had been seized. The old citadel at this place, dating from the seventeenth century, was not even armed, and no opposition was made to the seizure of the place. Infantry and artillery were now moving up behind the cavalry screen and more serious fighting began. On this same day the Belgian army scored a decided victory, the result of the Germans once more underrating their fighting spirit. A German column of all arms tried to rush the bridges over the rivers Velpe and Gethe near Haelen, a village a few miles east of the town of Diest. The fight that followed was the first battle of the war in the open. It began at eleven, and lasted until nearly six in the evening. After a brief cannonade, the German infantry pushed forward a firing line and then tried to rush the barricaded bridges with heavy columns of infantry. The Belgian rifles and machine guns inflicted severe loss upon them, but they attacked again and again. On the flank of the fight, the Belgian Lancers forded the Gethe and charged the German Uhlans. At last the enemy abandoned the attack, and drew off towards Hasselt. It was a day of which the Belgians had a right to be proud.

On the Thursday there was skirmishing about Tirlemont, and at the village of Eghezee, a few miles north of Namur, a German cavalry detachment was surprised by a column that had marched before dawn from Namur. A machine gun was captured and the affair was dignified by the newspaper correspondents by the name of the battle of Eghezee. At this time the newspaper reports conveyed a very misleading impression of the position in Belgium. The only really

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

important fight was the action at Haelen. But every skirmish with the advanced troops was reported as a great victory, and the impression was given that the German advance had been checked. What really was happening was that six army corps, or more than a quarter of a million of men, covered by a screen of some 20,000 cavalry, horse artillery, and motor detachments, was massing west of the Meuse and preparing to advance across the open country towards Brussels. The Belgian Staff and King Albert had no illusions. They knew that to make an obstinate stand along the Dyle with little more than 100,000 men would mean the destruction of the Belgian army. Their whole plan was merely to gain a few days by making a show of defence. As soon as the great mass of the German army began its advance it was decided to retire upon Antwerp. It was hard to abandon the capital and all the central provinces of Belgium, but it was sound policy to keep the Belgian army intact sheltered by the forts of Antwerp, where it would be a continual menace to the flank of the Germans when they wheeled round to face the advance of the Allies on the French frontier. It would at the very least have the effect of forcing the Germans to keep some hundreds of thousands of men in Belgium to hold the country and guard their communications.

On the 14th there were signs that the German advance in force had begun. The wave of cavalry swept westward towards the Dyle and southwards towards the Sambre. Aeroplanes bearing the distinguishing mark of the German Flying Corps were droning and snarling over Louvain and Nivelles. One of them flying over Namur dropped bombs into the streets. The Belgians drew in their advanced posts, and there was a sharp rearguard fight about Aerschot, and some fighting in front of Louvain. But still there came no attack in force on the Belgian front. The main mass of the German armies was really moving round the Belgian right through the country west of the Meuse, the heads of the columns directed on Mons and Charleroi. To have remained longer in position along the Dyle would have exposed the Belgian army to being outflanked and cut off from Antwerp. On the 19th a general retirement had begun, the Belgian army marching towards Malines and Antwerp without passing through Brussels.

Though preparations had been made to defend the capital, and the civic guard was busy digging entrenchments across the roads to the south and east of the city, the authorities decided that to make a fight for Brussels would only expose the great city to useless destruction. Early on the 19th the

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

Burgomaster, M. Max, was negotiating with the German Staff for a peaceful occupation of the city. That evening the German vanguard following up the Belgian retirement bivouacked just outside the eastern suburbs. They made their entry into Brussels next morning.

General von Arnim, who commanded the occupying force, had agreed that only a few thousand men should be quartered in the city itself. He behaved courteously enough to the conquered city. The flags of Belgium, France, and England were flying from the tower of the Town Hall. The Germans hauled down the French and English flags, but left the Belgian tricolour flying, and hoisted beside it the German flag and the banner of the city. He also gave notice that the people might keep their national flag flying from the houses and public buildings.

But though only four or five thousand men were quartered in Brussels, an army of one hundred thousand marched through the chief streets of the city. They moved out to the southwestward, for their destination was the French frontier. It was remarked that the men were all in new uniforms, that they looked fit and well, and showed no signs of the stress of a campaign. The fact was, none of them had yet been seriously engaged. They were two army corps just mobilised and proceeding to the fighting front.

The real hard work of the war was about to begin for the Germans. The allied armies were moving towards the southern frontier of Belgium. French cavalry were across the Sambre, and there had been fighting in the Ardennes. The first contact between the German armies and the Allies was beginning. The main mass of the Kaiser's hosts had been moved to meet the French and British advance. Meanwhile a separate army followed up the Belgians towards Antwerp, and the cavalry that had covered the advance pushed westward towards Ghent and Bruges.

This rapidly moving force overran in a few days the greater part of western Belgium. It was at this stage of the war that in reprisals for the alleged resistance of the civil population the flying columns of German cavalry and motor troops began the burning of villages and shooting of hostages. The idea that the Belgians could be conciliated by the invaders was being abandoned, and the war was passing into another phase in which terrorism and vengeance played an awful part.

In this second stage of the war the civilised world was

## THE COCKPIT OF EUROPE

horrified by the destruction of Louvain—a city which had been for hundreds of years the intellectual centre of Belgium. The unfortunate population suffered endless miseries at the hands of the invaders, and not only the houses of the citizens, but historic churches, colleges, and libraries were given to the flames, the outrage being represented as reprisals for an alleged attack on the German troops by a mere handful of individuals. There were other horrors in the destruction of quiet country towns and villages, but the names of those little places were unknown to most men, and so their fate did not excite the same indignation as the deliberate destruction of the treasures of art and literature in a world-famous university city. It was as if an invader had swept our own Oxford away in a storm of fire and blood.

While their country was being thus desolated the Belgians stubbornly continued their resistance. The army sheltered behind the forts of Antwerp, and the inundations created by opening the dykes along the Rupel and Nethe rivers was a continual menace to the Germans at Brussels. But this resistance of the army about Antwerp belongs to a later stage of the campaign. We must return to the events of August 1914, and before following any further the fortunes of the Belgian people we must tell the story of the great events which were now beginning on the Franco-Belgian frontier.



**H.M. ALBERT, KING OF BELGIUM**

"Of all the heroes of this war who will live in the memory of men, one of the purest, for whom the love felt will never be exaggerated, will be the young and great King of my little country."—M. Maeterlinck in the Paris *Journal*, Oct. 13





*Drawn by R. Cooper*

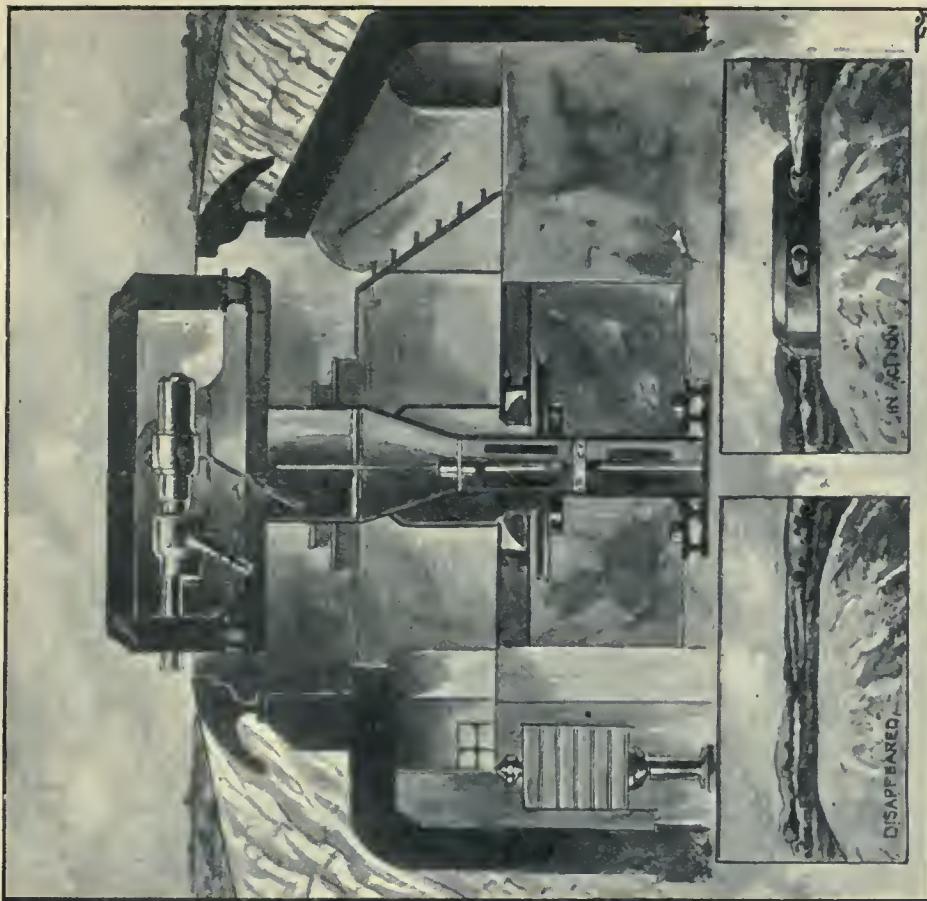
THE GERMAN ADVANCE GUARD INVADING BELGIAN  
TERRITORY AT THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, 1914

# THE BATTLEFIELDS



## THE BATTLEFIELDS OF BELGIUM

This map shows the battlefields of Belgium and its vicinity for the past 250 years, those places where the British fought being underlined



THE DISAPPEARING TURRET INTRODUCED  
BY GENERAL BRIALMONT

The famous Liege forts, designed by General Brialmont, consisted of a long sloping glacis crowned by a redoubt with a cupola containing heavy guns and surrounded by an infantry parapet and a deep ditch with galleries. The cupola itself was a disappearing and armour-clad turret made of hardened steel plates. It was raised and lowered by hydraulic power.

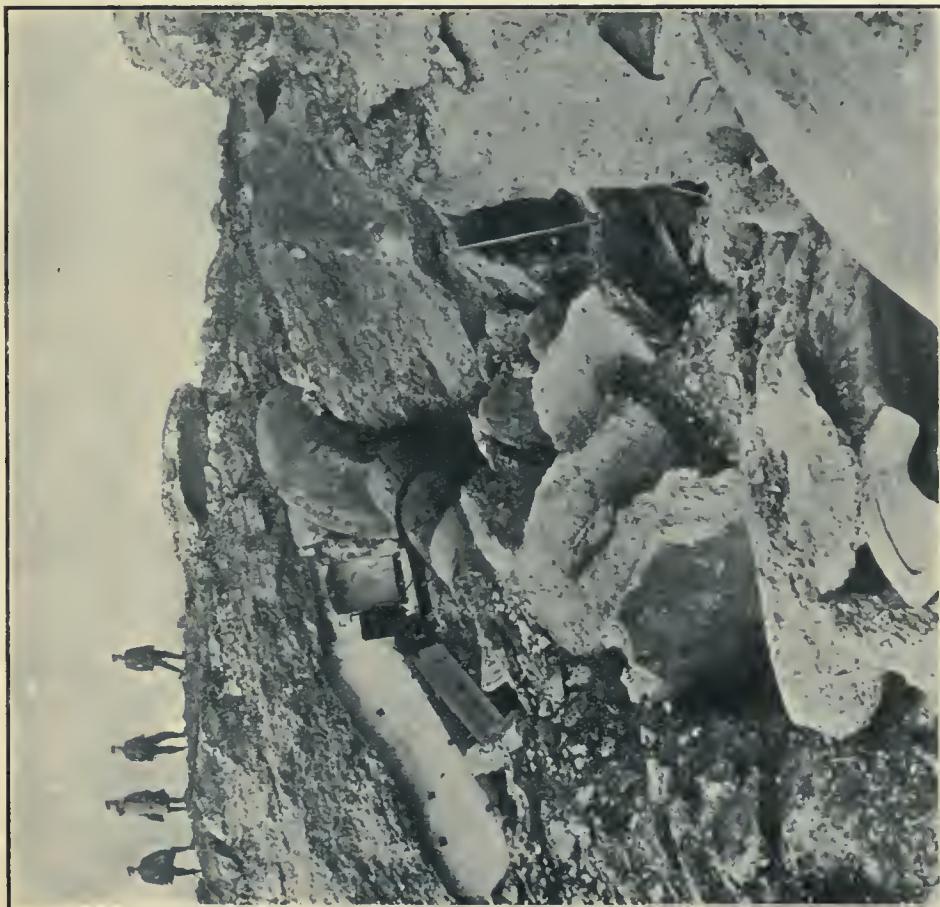


Photo International Illustrations Ltd.  
THE FORTS AT LIEGE THAT KEPT  
THE WAR LORD'S HOSTS AT BAY



*Drawn by a German artist and  
published in a German paper*

**THE INVADING GERMANS IN A BELGIAN VILLAGE**  
Incidents like the one pictured here are only too well authenticated by official reports



*Drawn by Maurice Romberg*

**BELGIAN LANCERS CHARGING UHLANS**

The uniform of the Belgian Lancers somewhat resembles that of the Uhlans. They did gallant work in the fighting round Liège, and after



Photo C. N.

LIEGE ("KNIGHT OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR")  
as it appears in the hands of the invader,  
showing the damage in the Place de l'Université



#### THE FIRST BATTLE IN BELGIUM

Following the German Chancellor's frank admission that "necessity knows no law," the Teuton hordes violated the neutrality of Belgium this day war was declared against France, and proceeded, in the Chancellor's own words, "to hack their way through" to their goal.

*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday from photographic material and notes*



From a sketch by A. Van Anrooy

BRUSSELS DURING THE FIGHTING AT LIÈGE

A shop at the corner of the Boulevard Anspach showed all manner of mourning wear, and advertised "complete mourning in twelve hours." In the foreground is a girl selling patriotic favours



*Drawn by J. R. Skelton from photographic material*

**THE GERMAN ARMY MAKING ITS  
TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO BRUSSELS**

Intended as it was to overawe the Belgian people and army, the occupation of Brussels failed signally in the accomplishment of its object



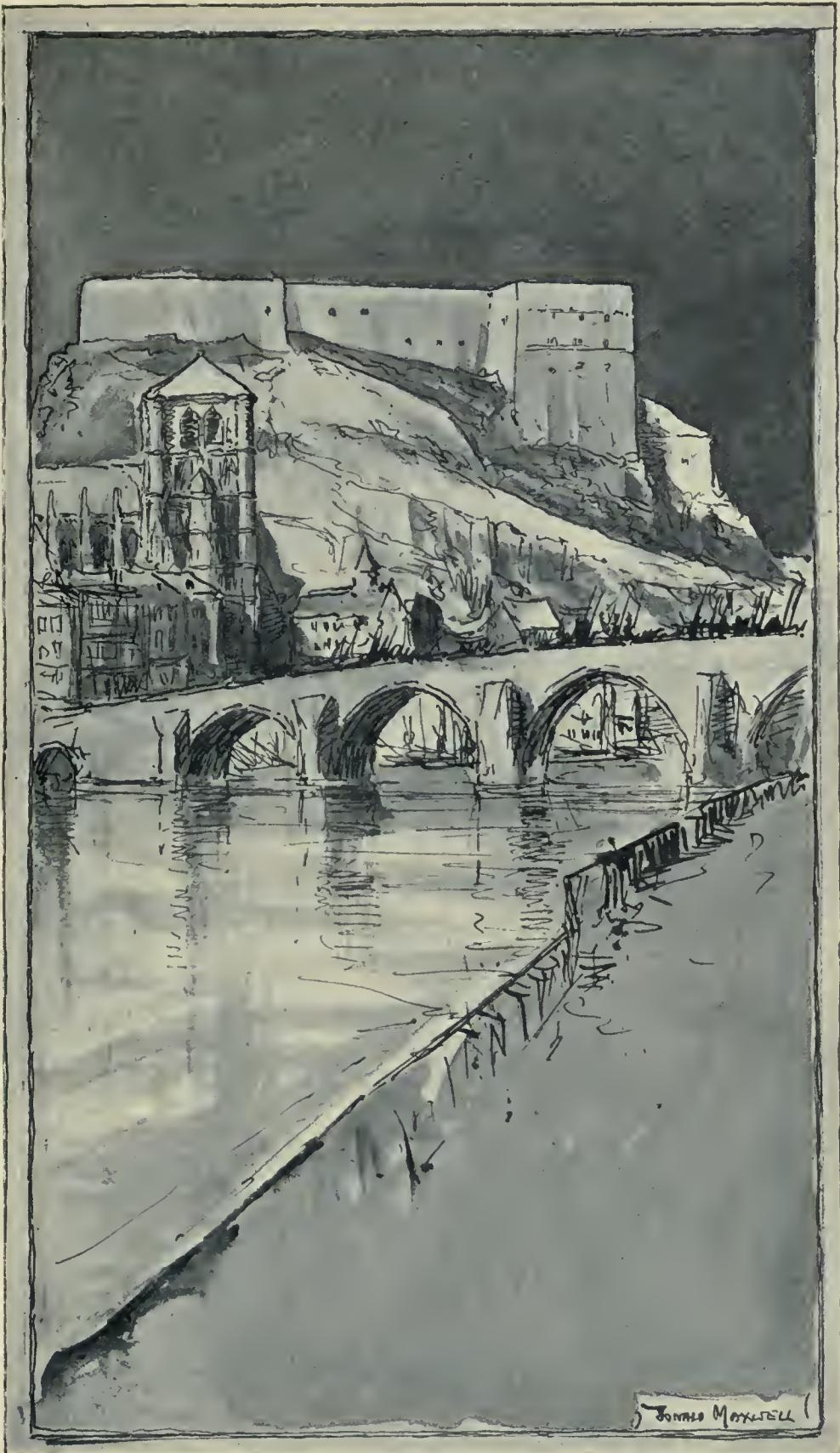
*Drawn by Donald Maxwell*

**FLEEING BEFORE THE PRUSSIANS**  
Brussels refugees making their way to the coast



*Drawn by Donald Maxwell*

**THE FIELD OF WATERLOO**  
Where history may yet repeat itself



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

THE BRIDGE OF HUY

The only road over the Meuse between Liège and Namur, and a fiercely contested point up to the time that Namur fell to the German siege guns



**FIELD-MARSHAL BARON VON DER GOLTZ**  
The German Governor of Belgium



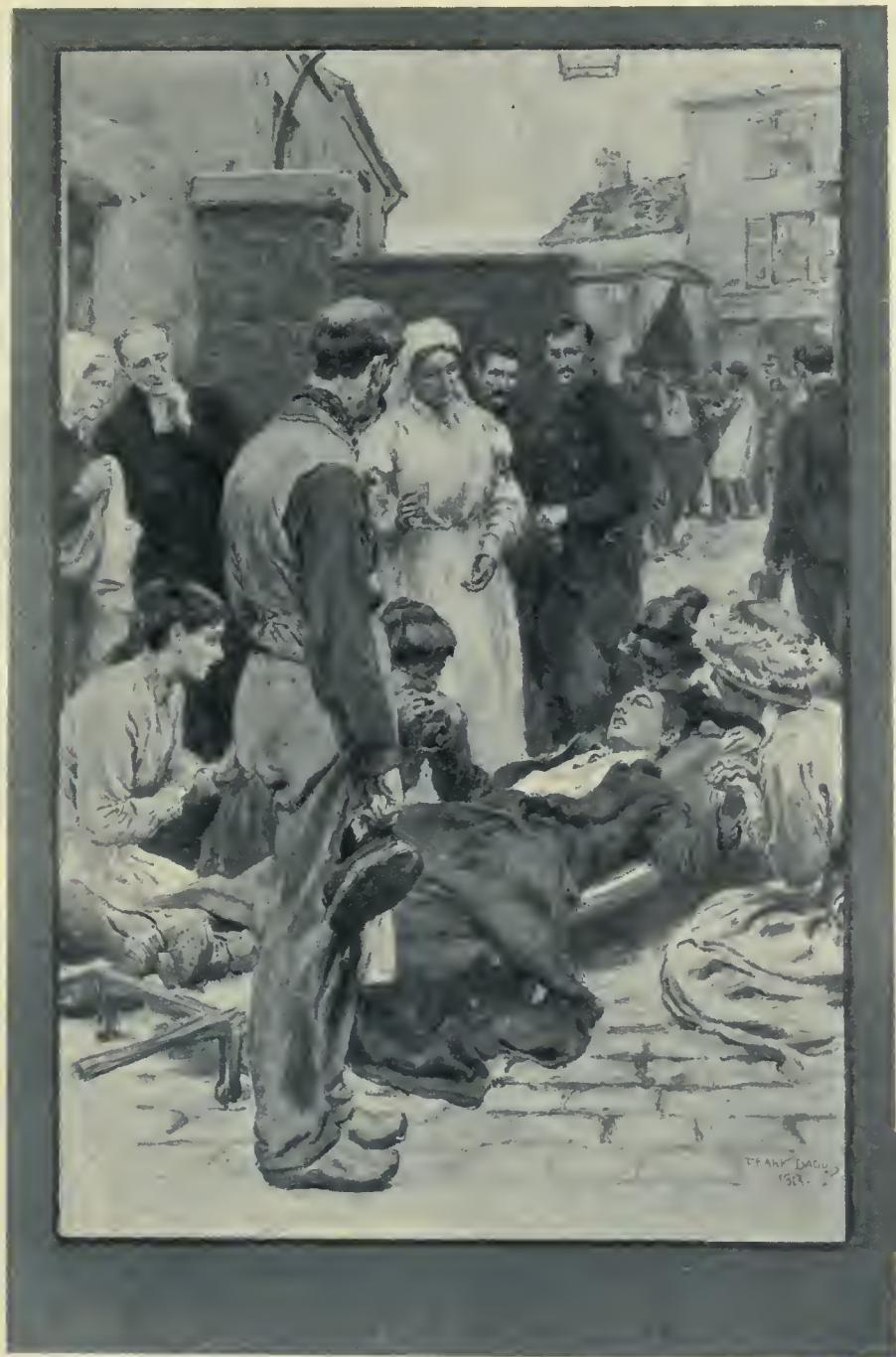
**M. MAX**  
The heroic Burgomaster of Brussels



*Photo E. N. A.*

**GENERAL F. VON EMMICH**  
Who commanded the German attacking force at Liége

**GENERAL LEMAN**  
The defender of Liége



Drawn by Frank Dadd, R.I.,  
from notes by an eye-witness

**MINISTERING ANGELS**  
Belgian women comforting a hero in his last moments

The women of Belgium vied with one another in exhorting their menfolk to die bravely for King and country, carried food and drink to the fighting line, repulsed several charges of Uhlans, and disabled 2,000 Germans with boiling water at Herstal



GERMAN OFFICERS HOLDING A WAR COUNCIL  
IN THE CHAUSÉE DE LOUVAIN



BRUSSELS IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY

D D D D D D D D D D D D  
D D D D D D D D D D D D  
D D D D D D D D D D D D  
D D D D D D D D D D D D  
D D D D D D D D D D D D



BELGIAN CARABINERS  
DEFENDING THE ROUTE



BRUSSELS CIVIC GUARD WITH MACHINE GUNS  
DRAWN BY DOG TEAMS, DURING THE RETREAT



TO CHECK THE INVADER, PEASANT MEN  
AND WOMEN MAKING TRENCHES



GERMAN SOLDIERS DRIVING THE PEASANTS  
OUT OF A BELGIAN VILLAGE



From a sketch by Mr. La Barre, the "Graphic's" special artist

**THE GERMAN BOMBARDMENT OF NAMUR**  
Artillery fire was directed not only against the forts on the heights surrounding the town, but against Namur itself



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

THE CITADEL OF NAMUR, WHICH WAS CAPTURED  
BY THE GERMANS ON AUGUST 22

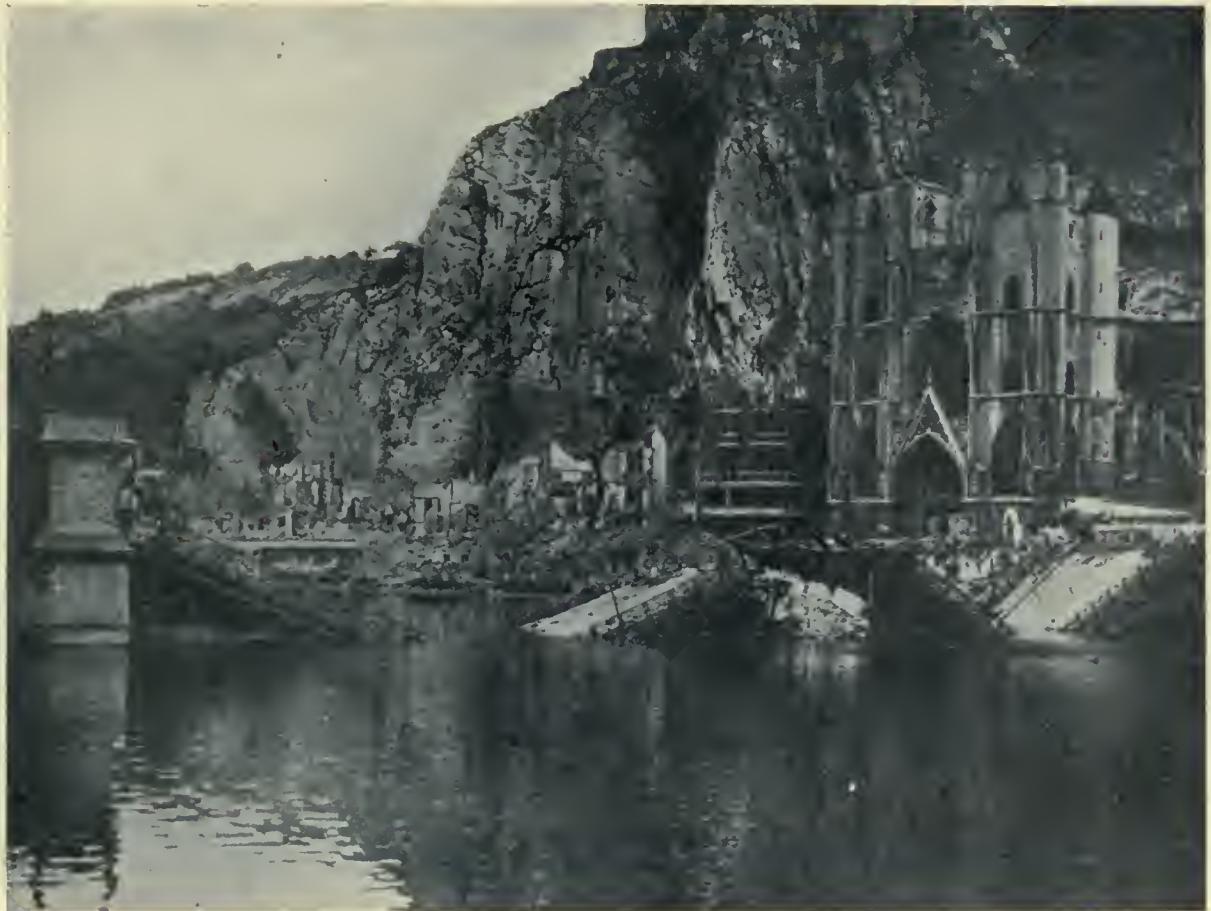
The ring of forts surrounding the citadel had been previously "smothered" by concentrated fire from the big German howitzers

100 100 100  
100 100 100



*From a sketch by Mr. La Barre,  
the "Graphic" special artist*

**CHARLEROI AFTER ITS CAPTURE AND  
DESTRUCTION**



*Photo C. N.*

THE RUINS OF THE CHURCH OF  
NOTRE DAME AT DINANT



*Drawn by a Belgian Civil Guard*

**THE TRIUMPHANT EAGLE**  
A symbol of Louvain

This picture is the work of Mr. Leou Lanckneus, who was Professor of Drawing at the Athénée Royal, Tournai, and one of the Civil Guards of Louvain



THE ACTION AT TIRLEMONT

*Drawn by Frank Dadd from sketches by A. Van Anrooy,  
the "Graphic" special artist.*

Although, in accordance with the general plan of campaign, the Belgians had to retire upon Antwerp, they delayed the German advance by offering a desperate resistance at Diest, Aarschot, Tirlemont and Louvain. The Germans occupied Tirlemont after a hard-fought struggle, during which they fired the place with their shells. The Belgians then fell back on Louvain, the rearguard digging shallow trenches and covering the retreat. At Aarschot, though hopelessly outnumbered, the Belgians held their ground for some time, and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.



GERMANY'S CRIME AGAINST POSTERITY

GERMANY'S CRIME AGAINST POSTERITY  
Louvain in ruins

TO WILLE  
ANTWERP



Drawn by Harold Oakley

THE DEFENCE OF ANTWERP AND THE OFFENCE OF THE ZEPPELIN  
Which discharged bombs on the historic town on August 25



*Photo Newspaper Illustrations, Ltd.*

A FORCE OF BRITISH MARINES LANDING  
FOR THE DEFENCE OF OSTEND



*From a photograph*

"Create examples which by their frightfulness will be a warning to the whole country"

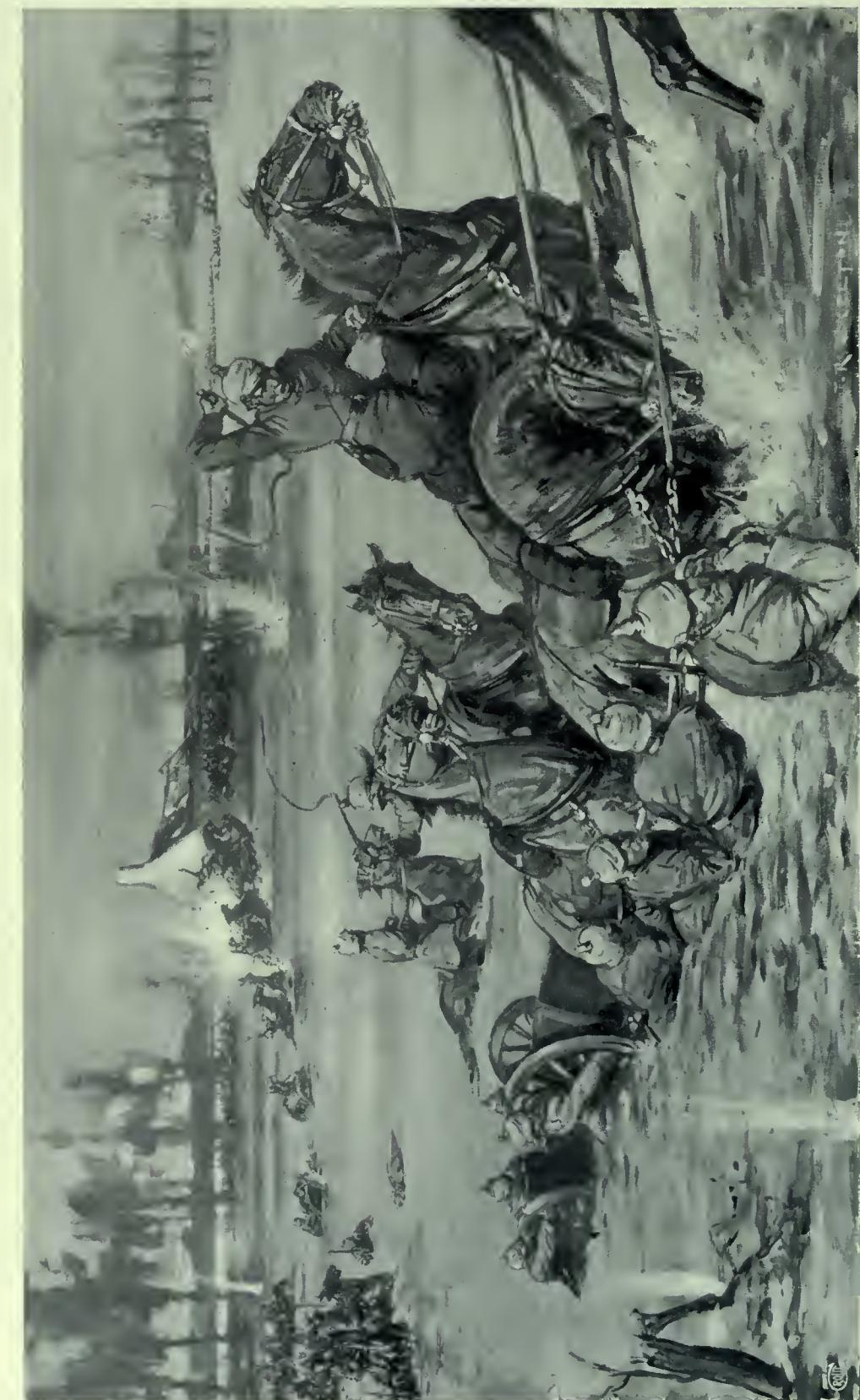
UNION OF  
CALIFORNIA



*From a photograph*

**THE KING OF THE BELGIANS IN THE FIELD**

The courage of King Albert, who has remained with his Army throughout the Belgian campaign, is one of the most striking features of the heroic Belgian resistance



Drawn by T. R. Skellon, from the description by Frank Hillier

FLOODING THE GERMANS OUT  
Opening the dykes near Antwerp,  
environs of Termonde

In the second week of September the Belgians achieved a great coup by opening the dykes on the south-east section of Antwerp. The German artillery was nearly all lost, and the soldiers who failed to get out of the inundated area before the water rose too high had to take to house and tree-tops, whence they were later gathered in as prisoners by the Belgians. Officially 1,000 were killed, but, with wounded and prisoners, their casualties must have been something like 4,000.

UNIFORM OF  
THE ARMY OF THE  
CONFEDERATE STATES



*Painted by Dudley Tennant*

IN THE FIRING LINE



## V

## THE FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND THE RETIREMENT ON PARIS

BELGIUM had waited anxiously for the news of help from the Allies. In England there was scarcely less of anxious impatience during the early August days when each morning brought news of the German advance towards Brussels, and there was no message telling of British or French soldiers joining in the hard-pressed Belgian battle-line. The absolute secrecy maintained as to the movement of our Expeditionary Force to the front added to the strain. Rumour told of the arrival of British troops at Antwerp and Ostend, and of French columns moving across the border-line of the little kingdom. But rumour was telling wild tales. It was not easy for the average man to realise that even the swiftest and smoothest working of the French mobilisation would require more than a fortnight before the vast numbers of the French fighting line could be placed upon the frontiers of France, or the preparation and transport of the British contingent completed.

The French dash at Mulhouse in Alsace in the very first week of the war seemed to suggest that our allies were ready for action. But this was a premature advance of a frontier detachment. On August 15th it seemed that serious operations were beginning. That day the first battle between French and Germans took place on the Belgian ground, and it was a French success which seemed to be of good augury for the opening campaign.

Though comparatively small forces were engaged, probably about 15,000 men on each side, there was hard fighting for nearly six hours. A French detachment had crossed the Meuse and occupied the town of Dinant. Here they were attacked by a German column, part of the army of

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

the Duke of Wurtemberg which had occupied the Belgian Ardennes. The French were driven out by superior numbers, but reinforcements came up in the nick of time and Dinant was retaken, and the Germans retired under the fire of the French artillery. Spectators of the fight spoke admiringly of the vigour and dash of the French infantry and the telling effect of the new French quick-firing field guns.

The fight at Dinant was regarded as the first encounter in the great opening battle of the war. But this did not begin for a week. The concentration was not sufficiently advanced as yet for the decisive operations to open.

The French Staff had decided to attack simultaneously at several points the German armies that were massing in Belgium and along the frontiers of France. The great battle line would extend for hundreds of miles from Belfort near the Swiss frontier, along the Vosges, and the borders of Lorraine, to the wooded hills of Luxemburg and the Ardennes, and the undulating plains west of the Belgian Meuse, along the Sambre and by Mons towards Tournai. It was not, of course, a continuous line of guns and men, everywhere of equal strength. Along the eastern frontier the line of entrenched camps and forts from Belfort to Verdun enabled comparatively small forces to oppose the German invasion. Here there was to be an advance from the northern Vosges into the lower lands of Alsace, and a second move of a strong force into Lorraine south of Metz by Château Salins and Morhange. These movements were inspired by the desire to show the tricolour again in the annexed provinces.

North of Verdun there was to be another advance towards Longwy, an attempt to hold out a hand to the little garrison that was gallantly keeping the flag flying over the old bastioned fortress which seemed hardly capable of defence against modern heavy artillery, but for all that was making a stubborn resistance. On the Allied left the main advance was to be made into Belgium. East of the Meuse a French army was to march across the Semois into the forests of the Ardennes, where the Duke of Wurtemberg's army had its headquarters at Neufchâteau. On the other side of the Meuse another army was to cross the Sambre, and march by the battlefield of Ligny against the German army that was advancing between Brussels and Namur and had already begun the siege of the Namur forts. This movement would be covered on the left by the advance of the British Expeditionary Force by Mons.

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

On Thursday, August 20th, while the Allies were still concentrating and closing up to the Belgian frontier, the Germans marched into Brussels and the Belgian army was retiring behind the forts of Antwerp. Having secured this success, the German armies poured southwards like a great tide of men, horses, and guns—Von Bülow's army on the left towards the Sambre, Von Kluck's on the right towards Mons, masses of cavalry covering the flank of the advance and scouting in front of it, while others rode westwards through Belgium and then wheeled southwards to threaten the communications of the British with the Channel ports. Meanwhile the huge howitzers that had shattered the forts of Liège were brought down to attack the defences of Namur.

The French cavalry were across the Sambre, riding by Gembloux and Ligny—names that recalled Napoleon's dash into Belgium in 1815. They had some successful skirmishes with German Uhlan's and dragoons, but they fell back to the river-line as they found the force in their front gathering strength from hour to hour. Von Bülow was pushing forward in advance of his colleague. For him too the names of quiet country towns and villages in the Hesbaye upland brought reminders of 1815, when Prussia was the good ally of England and his grandfather, another Bülow, commanded one of Blücher's four army corps.

On Friday the 21st the French occupied the line of the Sambre in force with their headquarters at Charleroi, the town of iron-works and mines where Napoleon crossed the river on his way to Waterloo. Next day the British were in line to the left of the French army. They were not yet in full force. Of his three army corps, Sir John French had only the 1st (Haig) and the 2nd (Smith-Dorrien). Of the cavalry he had only the 5th Brigade under the command of Sir Philip Chetwode. In all he had some 70,000 men and 280 guns in line. He had his headquarters at Mons, the old capital of Hainault. The place and the country round must have reminded many of our soldiers from northern England of what they had seen at home. Mons is a busy town of factories surrounded by a coal-field. On all sides one sees the chimneys and the tall headgear of the pits. Huge shale-heaps, sometimes planted with dwarf firs, tower beside the miners' villages. There is a network of railways, with sidings full of coal-trucks, embankments crossing the hollows of the ground, cuttings through the low hills that give the town its name, overhead bridges on the roads. There is abundance of cover, and a

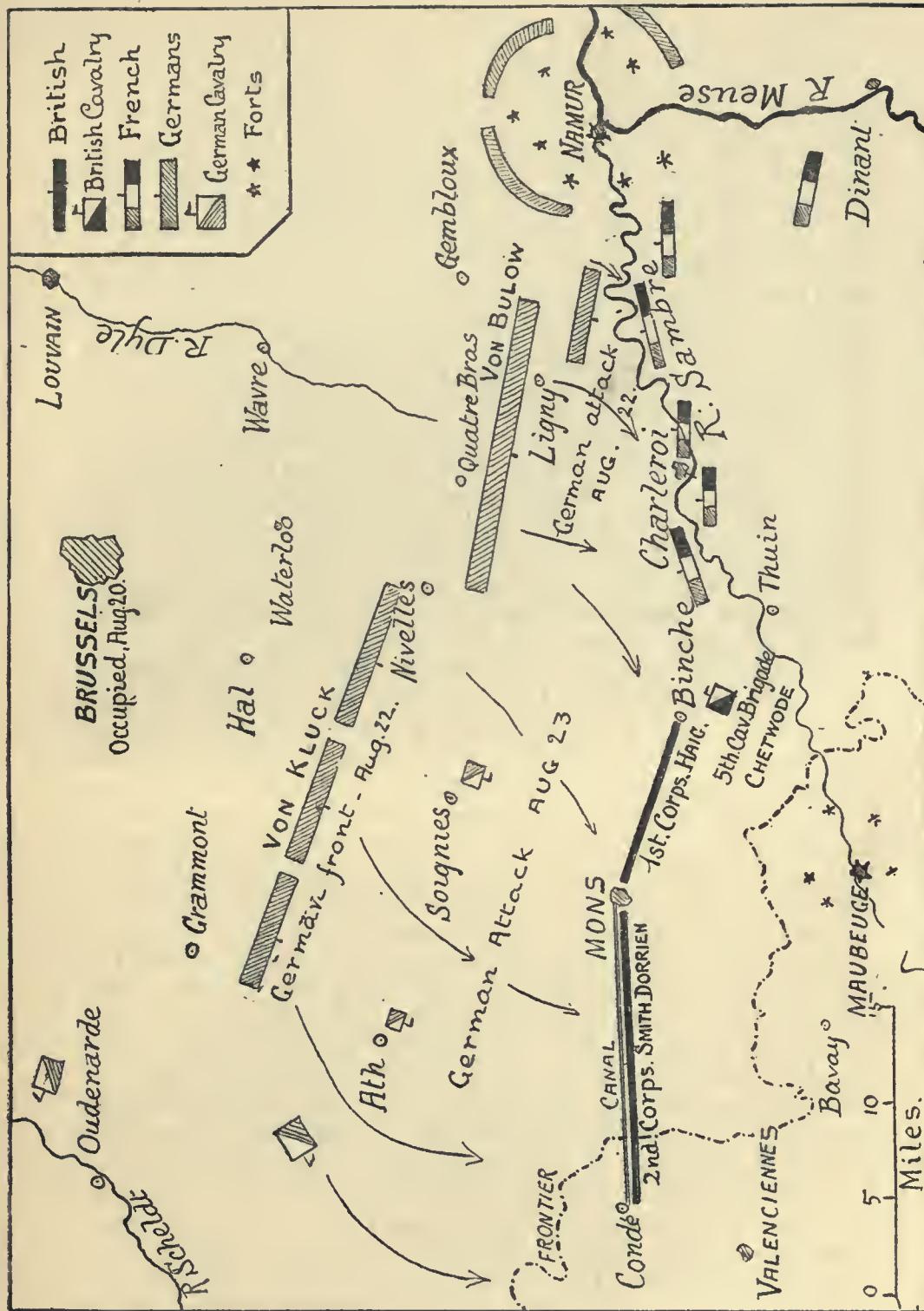
## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

fair choice of artillery positions. It is good ground for a hard fight on the defensive.

From Mons a canal, made before the days of railways for the coal and iron traffic of the district, runs westward by Condé to the Scheldt. Along this canal from Mons to Condé Smith-Dorrien's corps was posted, forming the left of the British line. The right was formed by Haig's corps from Mons eastward to the little town of Binche, which was held by the Guards' Brigade. Near Binche, Chetwode's cavalry were posted, or to put it more correctly, here was their headquarters, for all day they were coming and going along the front, pushing their patrols into every village—into Soignies and north-westwards towards Ath, while the airmen made bold flights overhead. Here and there at a turn of a road or in a village street our men came upon Von Kluck's advanced patrols, and in these skirmishes our troops had the upper hand and brought in a number of prisoners. In one of these fights in a village a party of our Hussars rode down a strong detachment of German cuirassiers, the two bodies of horsemen meeting front to front. "They were heavier, but our fellows were handier," was the explanation of our success given by a Hussar who was wounded in the skirmish.

All day the infantry and the gunners had duller work. They were digging lines of trenches and gunpits, and clearing the front of cover for an attacking force. It was known that the enemy was coming in dangerous strength, and it had been decided that both for the French and British the first of the fighting must be on the defensive. From the right as the day wore on there came the dull thunder of a far-off cannonade. Some said it was the sound of the big guns hammering at Namur, but it was really the roar of battle along the Sambre. Von Bülow was in action with the French.

The French Staff has been very reticent about what happened in the battle of this Saturday along the Sambre. We know, however, that there was a fierce fight for Charleroi hour after hour. Five times in the course of the day the place changed hands. Now it was held by the French, now by the Germans. It was alternately bombarded by the Krupp guns and the Creusot quickfirers. There were desperate hand-to-hand fights in the streets among the ruined houses. Bayonet met bayonet, twice the Zouaves and Turcos cleared the town with cold steel. But as each wave of the enemy's onset was hurled back, another came on. By nightfall the invaders held Charleroi.



BATTLES OF CHALEROI AND MONS (AUGUST 22 AND 23)

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

But this stubborn fight was only one episode of the battle. On the French right the enemy scored even a more important success. They forced their way across the Sambre and drove a great wedge between the Allies and Namur. That evening Von Bülow held Charleroi town and his left was in possession of all the ground in the sharp angle between the Sambre below the town and the Meuse above Namur. All day through the din of the fight came the thunder of the German cannonade around the besieged city. Some of the forts of Namur were already crumbling, and the garrison was losing heart and hope as the cannon thunder from the battle-field, rolling farther and farther, told them that the hope of relief was vanishing. Next day saw the surrender of Namur.

That day—Sunday, August 23rd—was a day of stern battle for our men about Mons. All the morning they had been busy completing and improving their entrenchments. They knew the French had been in action the day before, though they did not know the result. For the most interesting news was that the cavalry and air scouts told of masses of Germans steadily closing in on their front. In the morning all they saw of the enemy was a sight now and then of some venturesome Taube aeroplane buzzing like a giant wasp high in air.

Early that morning Sir John French had met his Generals and explained to them the general situation of the Allied armies, and what he understood to be General Joffre's plan, and discussed with them the immediate situation on the British front. In his despatch describing the day's operations, he very carefully sets forth the view then taken of the enemy's strength, according to information received from the French, and apparently confirmed by the British reconnaissances :

"From information I received from French Headquarters I understood that little more than one, or at most two, of the enemy's army corps, with perhaps one cavalry division, were in front of my positions, and I was aware of no attempted outflanking movement by the enemy. I was confirmed in this opinion by the fact that my patrols encountered no undue opposition in their reconnoitring operations. The observation of my aeroplanes seemed also to bear out this estimate."

Sir John writes with tactful discretion, but the later events of the day show that the French Staff had strangely neglected to keep him well informed. They had told him nothing of

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

the retirement already in progress from the Sambre, and the consequent danger of his being attacked, not by a force equal or even inferior to his own, but by an enormous mass of hostile troops set free by the success they had won the day before, with the result that later in the day the Germans were able to concentrate against the British a force outnumbering them at least two to one.

It was not till about three in the afternoon of that eventful Sunday that the German attack on the British lines began. It developed with remarkable rapidity. The cavalry scouts came galloping in with the news that great masses of the enemy were pushing forward on a wide front. Then the German artillery opened and almost at the same time dense firing lines of infantry began to push forward. Fire was opened from the British trenches and artillery positions. Cannon and rifle were hard at work along a front of twenty-five miles. For the first time our men met an attack delivered under the most novel conditions. Above and in front of the hostile firing lines, German aeroplanes swept backwards and forwards like great birds of prey. Sometimes they flew high over the British trenches regardless of the storm of bullets aimed at them, and dropped here and there what were at first thought to be bombs, but there was no explosion. The supposed bomb was a smoke-ball, which, fired by a percussion arrangement as it struck the ground, sent up a dense cloud of black smoke. This revealed the position of the enemy's gunners, and immediately a storm of shells burst over the indicated point. It was thought, too, that they signalled to their batteries by the way in which they varied their movements. The rapid circling to right or left in a spiral by the aeroplane evidently had some meaning. Both officers and men told of the wonderful accuracy and intensity of the German artillery fire. Of the infantry attack they did not form such a high opinion. It would be easy to quote many descriptions of the German infantry coming on in dense crowds in the closest of close order, shooting wildly and inaccurately, doing little damage, then coming to a standstill, and suddenly giving way under the well-aimed fire of our rifles or the menace of a counter-attack, and it was said that in these successive advances and retirements they suffered heavy loss.

There is no doubt that at many points the Germans made premature attempts to rush the trenches under the impression that the tremendous fire of their artillery had shaken the

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

defence. But the impression that they attacked in masses all along the line probably arose from the fact that the Germans put more men into a given front of firing line than we do. They believe in getting as many rifles to the front as possible at an early stage of the attack, arguing that this secures a greater development of fire, which is well worth some extra loss, and that supports behind the firing line are themselves exposed to loss without being able to use their rifles, and suffer severely while reinforcing their lines. Another feature of the German infantry attack is the bringing up of a large number of light machine guns into the actual firing line. On the march these are carried in waggons, and they are placed on a low mounting, so that they can be worked by men lying down. At some points in the fight, these machine guns were brought up in dozens. In fact one of those who watched the fighting said that in places it seemed as if the Germans were relying entirely on the effect of their cannon and machine guns and using their infantry chiefly as a support to these.

There is no doubt that in this Mons battle the Germans exposed their infantry to considerable loss in reckless attempts to rush the position. Von Bülow's rapid success the day before against the French made them hope for an equally quick result, but our men, well entrenched and shooting coolly and effectively, made a much more dogged resistance than they were prepared for. Von Kluck, who was in command, was able to throw against the British at least three army corps, and he had the further support of the right of Von Bülow's army, which after pushing back the French from the Sambre, could now turn against the right of the British position about Binche. Against our first line of some 70,000 or at most 80,000 men, the Germans must have brought at least 150,000 into action, without counting the masses of cavalry that were moving towards the ground between our left at Condé and the town of Tournai. Von Kluck concentrated his chief efforts against the British right held by the First Corps under Haig. With such advantage of numbers the Germans were able to develop converging attack on and around Binche. Chetwode's cavalry brigade, which was stationed here, had to be withdrawn, and Haig drew back his right to some rising ground south of the village of Bray. The Germans occupied Binche.

The gradual retirement of the British right made the angle at which the line of the First and Second Corps met at Mons more and more acute. The town and the ground about

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

it was becoming a salient, with all the dangers of such a point, which gives the attack the opportunity of pressing the defence from two sides at once. The place was held by General Hamilton, with part of the third division belonging to Smith-Dorrien's Corps.

French sent orders to Hamilton "to be careful not to keep the troops in this salient too long, but if threatened seriously, to draw back the centre behind Mons." Towards sunset, the attack was becoming so serious that Hamilton, acting on these orders, drew back out of the town, our men at every point repulsing the enemy's attempts to rush them.

Sir John had just sent his orders to Hamilton when he received by telegraph from General Joffre what he describes as "a most unexpected message," which was to the effect that to the right of the British the French army was everywhere retiring, "the Germans having on the previous day gained possession of the passages of the Sambre between Charleroi and Namur." This was news that certainly ought to have been sent to the British Commander-in-Chief on the Saturday evening. Though Sir John does not say so in his despatch, it is evident that he was thus led to fight a desperate battle against odds under a complete misconception of the general situation. General Joffre further informed him that at least three German corps were engaged in the attack on his front, and another was moving towards his left in the direction of Tournai. Joffre must have had this last information from a French territorial division posted at Tournai, which on this Sunday afternoon found masses of German cavalry in its front, and a great column moving between it and the British left.

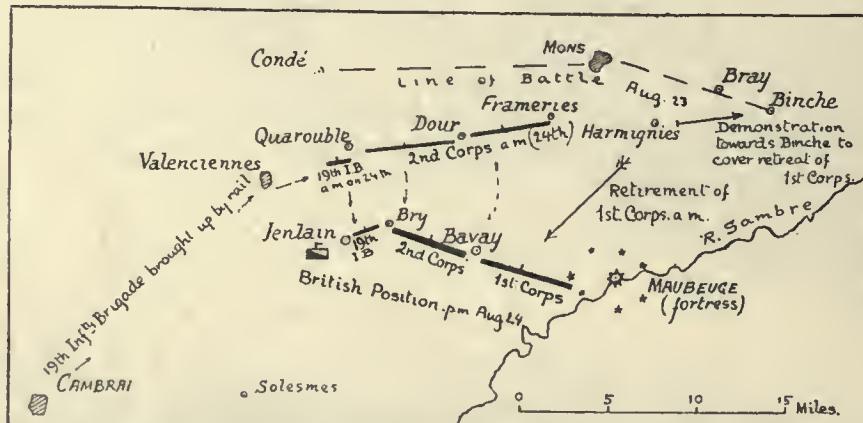
To hold on much longer in the advanced position he had occupied would have been for Sir John French to risk being completely cut off. Like a prudent commander, he had already selected and reconnoitered a second position a few miles to the rear to be occupied in case of a retirement becoming necessary. He thus describes it in his despatch :

"This position rested on the fortress of Maubeuge on the right, and extended west to Jenlain, south-west of Valenciennes, on the left. The position was reported difficult to hold, because standing crops and buildings made the siting of trenches very difficult, and limited the field of fire in many important localities. It nevertheless afforded a few good artillery positions."

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

On receiving General Joffre's telegram, Sir John "endeavoured to confirm it" by sending out his aeroplane scouts, and as a result of the reports they brought he decided there must be a retirement to the Maubeuge-Jenlain position at daybreak on Monday the 24th.

At the end of the long summer evening, the general position was this after more than six hours of hard fighting against greatly superior numbers: The left under Smith-Dorrien still held its ground along the Condé canal. The right, which had been exposed to the main German attack, had fallen back a little, but all along the line from left to right the men felt a



FIRST DAY OF THE FIGHTING RETREAT (AUGUST 24TH)

sense of victory. They had beaten back rush after rush of the German infantry. They had endured without being shaken a tremendous artillery fire, to which our batteries had steadily replied. They had suffered comparatively slight losses, thanks to their entrenchments and their admirable training for taking cover, and they believed they had inflicted very heavy losses on the enemy. The men in the ranks and the company-officer in a great battle like this on a front of many miles only know what is happening in his immediate neighbourhood, and rarely can realise the general situation. As darkness came on, and the firing died away, only bursting out here and there in sudden flashes for a while, the men settled down to rest in their positions in full expectation that they would hold them again next day. As we have seen, however, orders were being already prepared for a retirement at daybreak—the first stage, though no one had imagined it, of a fighting retreat to the neighbourhood of Paris. From the

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

letters of officers and soldiers, it appears that on the right of the line, and perhaps also on the extreme left, the movement began about midnight. The general orders were anticipated by sending messages to various parts of the line to move out of the trenches in the darkness. This retirement was on the whole well carried out, but here and there little marching columns of tired men lost their way, and some of them wandered into the German line which was quietly pushing forward in the night. In this way some prisoners were taken by the enemy.

In the early twilight of Monday morning the whole line was retiring. In order to hold at bay the superior numbers of the enemy, Sir John French showed a bold front. Haig, on the right, was likely to be the hardest pressed. He began the day by making a show of attacking the enemy in force, while his second division steadily retired; the first division, which included a Guards' Brigade, advanced from the neighbourhood of Harmignies against the enemy in the direction of Binche, this demonstration being supported by the whole of the artillery of the first and second divisions—over a hundred guns. Having checked the German advance, the force thus employed fell back fighting, acting as the rearguard of the whole of the British right. Meanwhile on the left, Smith-Dorrien, with the Second Corps, had fallen back to a position about five miles south of the Mons-Condé canal. His right was at the mining village of Frameries amid a network of colliery lines, with the embankments and buildings that gave a good deal of cover. His line ran westward by Dour to the village of Quarouble. Here he held on all through the morning hours, forming a solid barrier protected by which the First Corps was retiring on the Maubeuge position. But it was no easy task. The day before Von Kluck had thrown his main strength against the right. The columns that on the Sunday had been reported between Condé and Tournai now came into action, while another attack came across the canal, and yet a third pressed forward from Mons. According to Sir John French's report, Smith-Dorrien was attacked by two German corps in front, and another on his flank. This would mean that there were over 100,000 men against between 30,000 and 40,000.

Sir John French had ordered General Allenby with the cavalry division to act as a general reserve for a whole force. At half-past seven on the Monday morning Allenby received a message from Sir Charles Fergusson, commanding the fifth

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

division about Frameries, facing Mons, and forming the right of Smith-Dorrien's line, saying that he was "very hard pressed and in urgent need of support." Allenby brought up his cavalry on Fergusson's right. In front was the second cavalry brigade under General De Lisle, the hero of many dashing exploits in the South African War. De Lisle thought he saw a good chance of checking the enemy's advance by charging the flank of their infantry. But for once he had bad luck. As the brigade rode at the enemy their progress was checked about five hundred yards from the German flank by lines of wire fences, and after an attempt to struggle through they had to fall back under a deadly fire, the 9th Lancers and the 18th Hussars suffering severely as the brigade retired.

On the other flank French was able to give Smith-Dorrien the support of the 19th Infantry Brigade. It had so far been guarding the line of communications, but the day before it had been brought up by railway to Valenciennes. In the early morning it marched out to reinforce the British line at Quarouble. By midday the retirement of the First Corps had proceeded so far that Smith-Dorrien could in his turn begin his retreat. Protected on the right by Allenby's horsemen, and supported on the left by the new reinforcements, he fell back slowly and steadily, beating off every attack of the enormous force of Germans that was pressing on his front and trying to work round his flanks. It was a wonderful piece of fighting. All day long the safety of the whole force depended on his resolution and judgment and the disciplined steadiness of his men. To hold on too long, or to retire too soon, at each point of the long line would have been destruction to the whole. But the delicate operation was accomplished with complete success. More than once during the subsequent days of the fighting retreat Smith-Dorrien had to do the same work. The losses were heavy, and as the force was continually retiring, only a few of the wounded could be taken away by the ambulances. Most of those who fell were left on the ground. Hence the large proportion of "missing" in the casualty returns. It is only right to say that the German ambulance corps collected and cared for our wounded with their own.

By nightfall the whole of the Expeditionary Force had reached the Maubeuge position. The First Corps was on the right, its right flank protected by the forts of Maubeuge, its line extended to the village of Bavey. Thence the Second Corps held a line extending to Jenlain, with the 19th Brigade



*Painted by Dudley Tennant*

THE CHARGE OF THE 9TH LANCERS  
ON THE GERMAN GUNS



## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

forming its left. Allenby's cavalry division protected the exposed left flank.

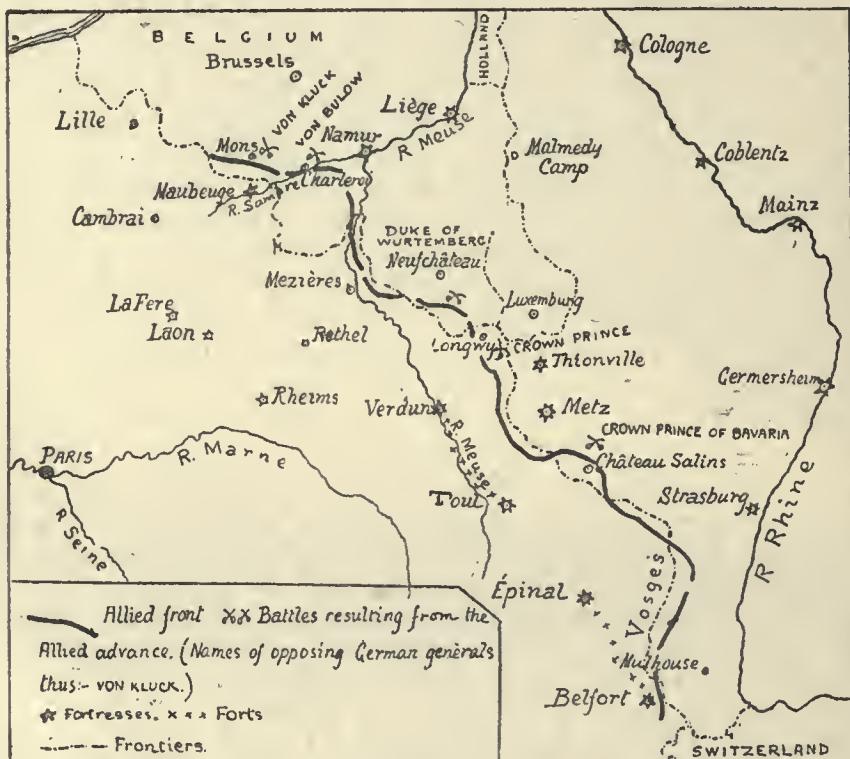
At this time both in France and England there was a general impression that though the advance into Belgium had failed, the Allied armies would be able to make a prolonged stand in the north, "on the line of the frontier fortresses," and there was frequent mention of Maubeuge and Lille as great strongholds that would assist the defence. Maubeuge could still be counted as a fortress, and it appears something had been done to strengthen the forts—planned in 1875—with concrete and armour to resist the improved artillery of to-day. Nothing of the kind had been done at Lille, which till recent years ranked as the great fortress of the north. Its forts had been actually condemned and disarmed before the war. Maubeuge gave temporary support to the Expeditionary Corps, but as Sir John French notes in his despatch, if he had remained in its neighbourhood, with the French continually retiring on his right and Von Kluck accumulating enormous forces to turn his left, he would run the risk of being forced into the fortress. And the experience of all modern war shows that an army which once takes shelter behind the outlying forts of a fortress, and allows itself to be invested there, is doomed.

For our army a prolonged resistance at Maubeuge would have been even more difficult than for a French force. The magazines of Maubeuge could not have supplied a single round of ammunition for our cannon or rifles. Sir John French had, therefore, to continue the retreat, and during the days that followed the British force had to perform the arduous task of protecting the left of the whole Allied line during the great movement southward.

Our attention has very naturally been fixed chiefly on the part of the long line at which our troops were engaged. But to understand what was happening, one must take into account the events on the whole front from Belfort to Mons. Even before the great battles on the Belgian frontier about Charleroi and Mons, the French attacks elsewhere had ended in temporary failure, and the Germans were advancing in great force at several points. In the same week that ended with the fighting on the Sambre, the army that had crossed the frontier of Lorraine had been defeated by the Crown Prince of Bavaria commanding the three corps of the Bavarian army, and a German army corps—a force of about 150,000 men. This great battle, which took place near Château

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

Salins, passed at the time almost unnoticed, for the news was arriving from Mons. The Bavarians claimed to have captured thousands of prisoners and a hundred and fifty guns. French official reports admitted the defeat, but denied that quite so many guns had been taken. The victors entered France, and occupied Lunéville. The French fell back on Nancy and the line of the Vosges, abandoning all the ground they had occupied in Alsace. At the same time, in the centre,



SKETCH MAP TO EXPLAIN SITUATION AT THE END OF THE THIRD WEEK OF THE WAR

the army of the Crown Prince of Germany, advancing from Luxembourg, defeated a French army near Longwy, and on the same day the Duke of Wurtemberg's army won a victory in the southern Ardennes. The French, advancing from the middle Meuse, had crossed the little river Semois and were advancing through the wooded hills towards Neufchâteau. This movement was intended to clear the east bank of the Meuse of the enemy, and co-operate with the army on the Sambre in relieving Namur. A few miles north of the Semois,

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

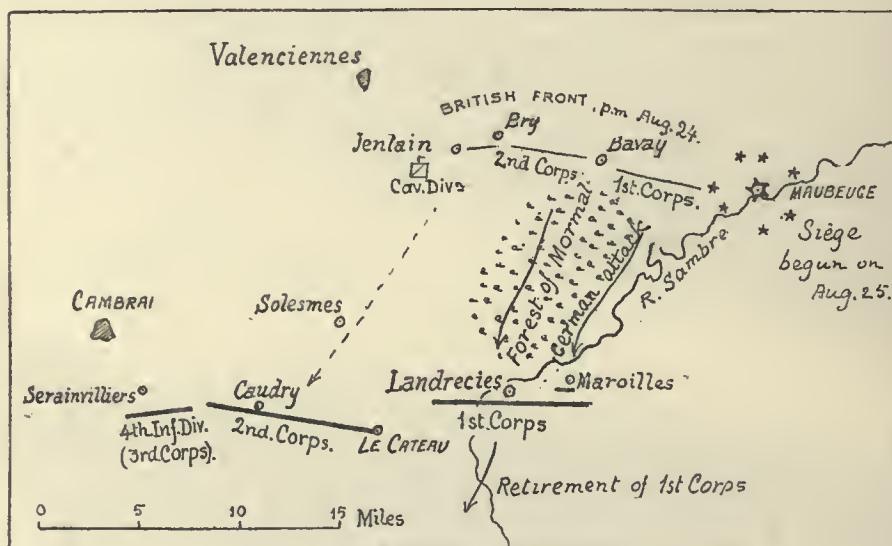
the French, according to their own account, were "attacked by superior numbers issuing from the shelter of the forest, and forced to retreat." They fell back across the Semois, and for a short time with the army that had been defeated near Longwy they tried to hold the line of the Meuse. But besides the fighting along the Semois there had been a battle along the Meuse above and below Dinant, where the Saxon army under Von Hausen fought its way across the river line. It then marched by the west bank of the Meuse and thus attacked the left of the French, who were holding the river about Mézières and the old battle-ground of Sedan. Under the combined front and flank attack the defence of the Meuse collapsed, Mézières surrendered, and the French army was gradually forced back towards Rethel and Rheims.

The advance of the Bavarian army was checked by the French resistance on the line of the eastern fortresses. The Crown Prince's army, forming the German left centre, made slow progress in the difficult country of the Argonne. But on the enemy's right centre the Duke of Wurtemberg's army, supported by two Saxon corps under General Hansen, pushed forward steadily, driving the French back towards Rheims, and this movement continually threatened to outflank the right of the French army which was retiring from the Sambre. He had, therefore, to continue his retreat day after day, and the British force had to conform to this movement, forming from first to last a solid protection against the German attempt to outflank the extreme left and roll up the whole line. Unless one takes this wide view of the situation, one cannot realise the full extent of the service which Sir John French and his gallant army rendered to the Allied cause.

We now resume the story of the fighting retreat of our Expeditionary Corps. On the evening of Monday, August 24th, orders were issued for a retirement to begin at 5 a.m. next morning to a position east of Cambrai with the centre near the town of Le Cateau. Sir John French believed that by this time the enemy's forces would be becoming exhausted, and expected the forces would not be very vigorous. The cavalry covered the rear of the retiring column and the exposed western flank. The 4th division of the Third Corps had reached Le Cateau by train, and on the morning of the 25th General Snow, who was in command, had with him eleven battalions and eighteen guns. This force was ordered to move out from Le Cateau and take up a position with its right south of Solesmes, and its left towards the Cambrai road. This

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

would provide a protection for the left of Sir John French's force as it moved back from Le Cateau. During the day the Germans did not press the retreating British closely, and the position was occupied by evening, the Second Corps to the west of Le Cateau and the First to the east of it by Landrecies and Maroilles. The First Corps had been late in coming in. They had marched by the roads to the east of the forest of Mormal. It was after nine o'clock when the last of the troops were in. Some work had been done in the evening to entrench the ground along the front, and after a relatively easy day the tired men were hoping for a little rest, but about half-past



THE FIGHTING RETREAT, AUGUST 25TH

nine heavy firing broke out in the darkness on the right of the line. The German 9th Corps, marching through the woods of Mormal, had driven in the outposts, and was attacking Landrecies in the dark. Sir John French in his despatch says he had intended to bring the left of the First Corps farther west, so as to fill up a gap which was left between Landrecies and Le Cateau, "but the men were exhausted and could not get farther in without rest."

The 4th Guards' Brigade held Landrecies. Exhausted as they were, they sprang to arms and gave the Germans a warm reception. There was a desperate fight in and around the little town. An officer of the Irish Guards wrote that from ten o'clock till after midnight the brigade had to meet a series

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

of attacks at close quarters. German guns sometimes opened in the darkness only 200 yards away. The enemy suffered severely from machine gun and rifle fire as they poured in masses out of the forest and into the northern side of the town. There was close fighting with the bayonet in the narrow streets amid bursting shells and burning houses. The Germans came sweeping round the western side trying to break through the gap in the line, and troops had to be hurried up to protect them. Farther away to the right there was another roar of fire around Maroilles, and Sir Douglas Haig sent word that his first division was heavily engaged there. There were two French reserve divisions a few miles away to the right, and Sir John sent off gallopers to ask them to come up to his assistance. After what seemed an endless time, under the strain of this confused fight in the darkness, the French came into action, checking the German turning movement east of Maroilles. But Haig's men were still in serious danger, hard pressed in front, and with the enemy gradually enveloping Landrecies. After midnight the Guards gradually drew back, fighting every inch of the way out of the town, and Haig got his corps together a little to the south of the ground on which it had first halted.

During the fighting of the last two days the British cavalry had become scattered over a very wide front, and had also had hard work covering the exposed flank. Sir John French had already asked General Sordet, commanding a French cavalry corps of three divisions, which was retiring on his right, to come to his help. He wished to have this large mounted force to cover his left and enable him to collect his own cavalry. To use Sir John's own words :

" During the fighting of the 23rd and 24th, I visited General Sordet and earnestly requested his co-operation and support. He promised to obtain sanction from his Army Commander to act on my left flank, but said that his men and horses were too tired to move before the next day. Although he rendered me valuable assistance later on in the course of the retirement, he was unable for the reasons given to afford me any support on the most critical day of all—the 26th."

Wednesday, August 26th, was indeed a critical day for the Expeditionary Force. Sir John French had intended to continue the general retirement at daybreak, and by this time the First Corps, weary with the night engagement, and after only a very brief rest, was already on its way southward,

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

marching by Wassigny towards Guise. Smith-Dorrien was to follow immediately with the Second Corps and the 4th division, but at sunrise he was attacked all along the front and on the left. Some six hundred cannon, the guns of four German army corps, had been brought up against him during the night, and opened fire as soon as there was light to see. Smith-Dorrien reported to Sir John French that he judged it impossible to continue the retirement in face of such an attack. The situation therefore was this : three English divisions, two of them seriously reduced by several days of fighting and marching, were opposed to at least twelve German divisions ; a hundred and fifty guns in action against more than six hundred. There had been no time to entrench the position properly, and there was no support available, except that of Allenby's cavalry, which had been very heavily over-worked. Sir John French notes that the First Corps was at the moment "incapable of movement." Sordêt's French cavalry corps was, it is true, moving up to the left rear of the British line. But it could give no immediate help. Sir John says he sent Sordêt an urgent message asking him to support the retirement on the left, but the General replied that "owing to the fatigue of his horses" he found himself unable to intervene in any way. Sir John therefore sent orders to Smith-Dorrien "to use his utmost endeavours to break off the action and retire at the earliest possible moment."

But for some hours this was impossible. To have retired at once would have been to be rushed by the German attack. The little British force had to hold its ground until it had met and thrown back the main onset of the enemy. Heavily outmatched as they were, the artillery made a splendid fight. Batteries were kept in action when there were only two or three men left to each gun. In one of the batteries a single gun kept firing with only an officer and a gunner to fire it, all the others having been smashed and silenced by the heavy shell fire of the enemy. The infantry fought with equal steadiness, and again and again drove back the German attacks. But against such numbers there could be only one result. In the afternoon Von Kluck was pushing forward huge masses of men and guns to turn the British left. "It became apparent," says Sir John French, "that if complete annihilation was to be avoided, a retirement must be attempted, and the order was given to commence it about 3.30 p.m."

The movement was covered by the cavalry, which more than once checked the enemy by a daring charge, and by

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

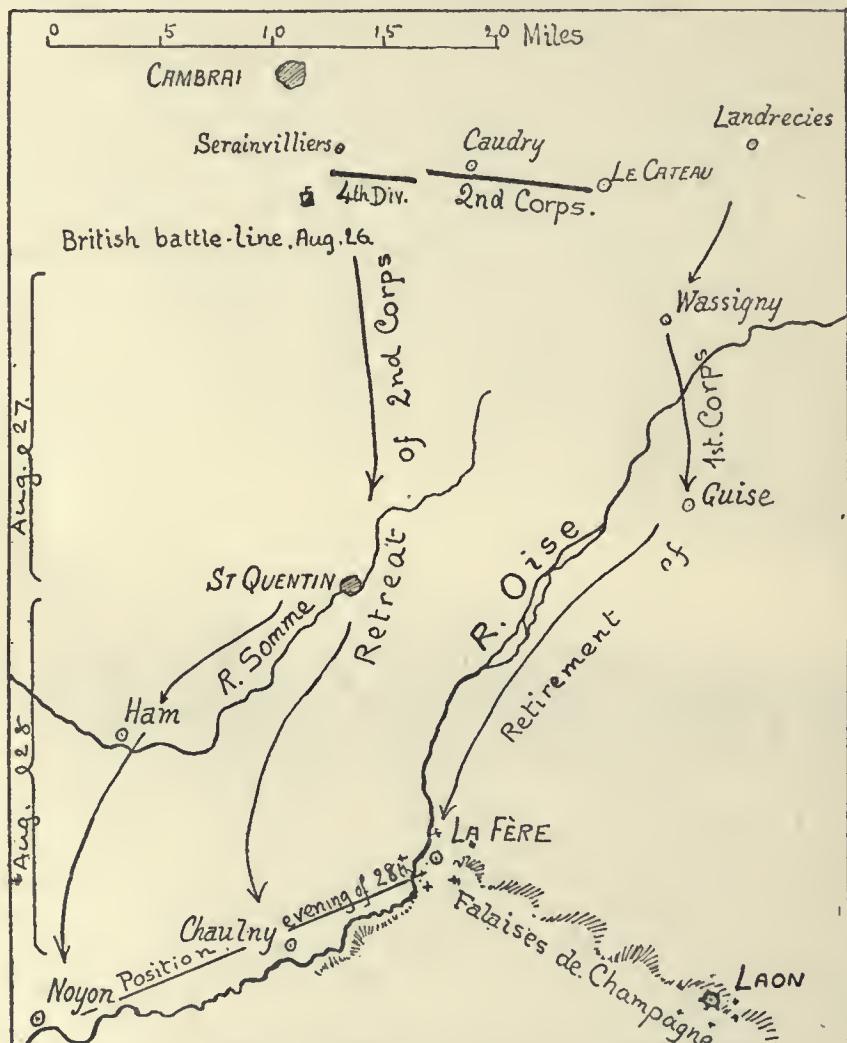
several of our batteries, which, though they had lost heavily, devoted themselves to securing the safety of the retiring infantry. Guns were kept in action till close pressed by the enemy and then galloped back to open fire again from a new position. In this rearguard fighting some guns were disabled by the loss of their teams and had to be abandoned. But they were honourably lost. The regulations of every army in Europe lay it down that artillery must be prepared thus to sacrifice itself, and that there is no dishonour in thus losing its guns. The Germans had been so roughly handled and had lost so heavily that presently the pursuit slackened. In summing up his record of this wonderful fight against odds at Le Cateau, Sir John French pays this well-deserved tribute to Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, the hero of the day :

“I cannot close the brief account of this glorious stand of the British troops without putting on record my deep appreciation of the valuable services rendered by General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. I say without hesitation that the saving of the left wing of the Army under my command on the morning of the 26th August could never have been accomplished unless a commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity, and determination had been present to personally conduct the operation.”

Far into the night the British retreat continued. Next day, though the Germans were still in pursuit and endeavouring to work round Smith-Dorrien's left, the French gave some useful assistance, and the situation had greatly improved. Sordêt's cavalry came into action at last and drove the enemy's cavalry back towards Cambrai. General D'Amade with two French reserve divisions had moved down from Arras, and forced Von Kluck to detach a strong column to guard his own right. This took some of the pressure off the retirement of the Expeditionary Force. For days the men had been fighting and marching with only the briefest opportunities for rest, and they had suffered heavy loss, but all were in good heart, and the way in which they had held their own, whenever they came into actual contact with the enemy, gave the impression of victory, even though they were retiring.

During the 27th and 28th the retirement continued, the German pursuit gradually slackening, and on the evening of Friday, the 28th, Sir John French's force halted along the river Oise, its left at Noyon, its centre at Chaulny, and its

FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS  
right near the forts of La Fère. In six days the force had marched from the Belgian frontier to the middle Oise, beating off repeated attacks of the enemy, and successfully foiling Von Kluck's attempts either to overwhelm it by mere weight



BATTLE OF LE CATEAU AND RETREAT TO THE OISE

of numbers or to outflank and cut it off. It was a feat of which Sir John French and his gallant comrades had good right to be proud, and at the same time our men had acted as the flank guard of the whole French army and saved it from a terrible disaster. General Joffre, in a despatch ad-

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

dressed to Sir John French, frankly and fully recognised this great service.

On the south bank of the Oise from Chaulny to La Fère the ground rises chiefly from the river, and from La Fère eastwards and south-eastwards by Laon and Rheims, the sloping plateau which extends towards these places from the valley of the Aisne drops in bold slopes towards the northern plains of France. This line of heights, known in France as the Falaises de Champagne (the cliffs or downs of Champagne), was always considered to be the last position to be held by a defending army against an invader coming from the north and east. It was for this reason that in 1875 La Fère, Laon, and Rheims were fortified. But their outlying forts had since been made obsolete by the improvement of heavy artillery. It was expected that a stand would be made by the Allies on this natural line of defence. The French Staff, however, decided that it would be sounder policy to continue the retreat and reorganise the general line of the various armies south of the Marne with the left protected by the forts of Paris, and the right resting on Verdun, an eastern barrier fortress. During the last days of August, therefore, and the opening days of September, the Expeditionary Force, conforming to the general movement of the French, marched south-eastwards to the crossings of the Marne above Meaux.

General Gough with the 3rd Cavalry Brigade and General Chetwode with the 5th covered the retreat. The enemy were pursuing with two columns of cavalry well to the front. These were attacked by our horsemen. On the left Gough routed the Lancers of the Prussian Guard, and Chetwode's attack on the right scattered the enemy, who suffered severe loss. The British retreat was now protected on both flanks by French armies, and the enemy's pursuit was partly checked by a third French army menacing its flank.

The British line of march now lay through the wooded country that covers so much of the ground between the Oise and the Marne. In the forest lands round Chantilly and Compiègne our rearguards more than once turned suddenly upon the German pursuit and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

On September 1st, while retiring through this wooded country, the 1st Cavalry Brigade, under General Briggs, was overtaken by a strong force of German cavalry and artillery, south of Compiègne. At first the fight went badly for our men. L Battery of the Royal Horse Artillery was caught

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

in a storm of fire from twelve German guns at close range. All the officers but one and many of the men were killed and wounded. Guns were dismounted, and at last only a single one of them was in action, served by three men. It was reported at the time that the battery was taken, but this gun was still in action when a reinforcement of the Third Corps came up through the woods, marching to the sound of the cannon. The remnant of the battery was saved, and the cavalry, charging through the trees, captured both the enemy's batteries. On the same day the 4th Guards' Brigade fought a severe rearguard action with the enemy at Villers-Cotterets. They drove the Germans off, but themselves lost heavily. The Irish Guards had a long casualty list.

As each stream and river was passed, the Royal Engineers destroyed the bridges to delay the pursuit. On September 3rd the last of the rearguard crossed the bridge over the Marne at Meaux, and blew it up in the face of the pursuing cavalry. The retirement continued beyond the Marne as far as its tributary the Grand Morin.

During the whole of the retreat our aviators, under the command of Sir David Henderson, had done splendid work in watching the enemy's advance, and keeping the German flying men in check. On three occasions at least a British aeroplane fought a duel high in air with one of the enemy's flying machines, and sent it crashing to the ground. "The British Flying Corps," wrote Sir John French, "has succeeded in establishing an individual ascendancy, which is as serviceable to us as it is damaging to the enemy."

As a precautionary measure, the French Government had been removed from Paris to Bordeaux. General Gallieni, a veteran officer with a record of service beginning with the war of 1870 and ending with the reorganisation of Madagascar after the French conquest, had been given the command of Paris, and was putting the place into a state of defence. At the same time, he massed behind the northern forts a mobile army, which was presently to play an effective part in the campaign.

In these first days of September many were inclined to take a depressing view of the situation in France. In a fortnight the French offensive along the frontiers had failed, and the left and centre of the Allied armies had been drawn back beyond the Marne under constant pressure from a huge tide of invasion. Paris seemed to be threatened with immediate attack, and the rapid fall of so many fortresses made

## FIRST GREAT BATTLES AND RETIREMENT ON PARIS

men doubtful about the resistance its defenders could make. But just when all seemed darkest, there came a sudden change in the whole position. The Allies had reorganised behind the Marne and were no longer to act on the defensive. On September 6th a forward movement began all along the line, and in the following days British and French fought side by side victoriously on the very ground over which they had retired a few days before. The tide of invasion was not only stemmed, but seemed to be ebbing fast. But these glorious pages belong to the second phase of the campaign. The first closed with the successful conclusion of the "fighting retreat."





"The British Flying Corps has succeeded in establishing an individual ascendancy which is as serviceable to us as it is damaging to the enemy."—Sir John French in his despatch of September 14, 1914





*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday*

**IN CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY**

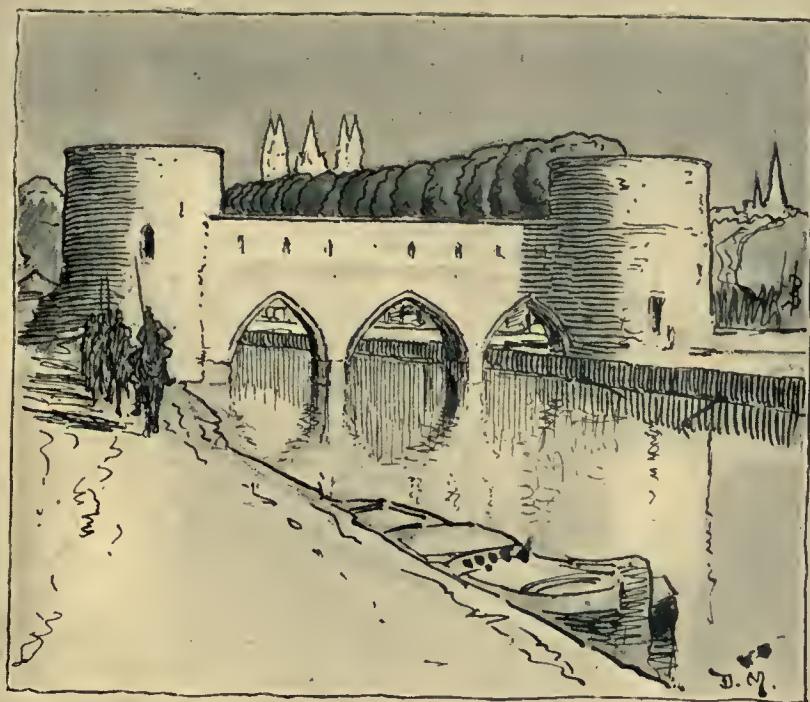
British cavalry going into dismounted action near Lille, showing how dismounted cavalrymen form a firing line and act as infantry if required

**UNDAUNTED BY SHOT AND  
SHELL: DRIVER OF THE  
R.F.A. SAVING HIS GUN**

A driver of the R.F.A., saving his gun in difficulty, rode up under a heavy fire and fetched it out of action. As he was limbering up, a shell dropped between the centre horses, killing them outright. He and the head driver of the team promptly cut away the harness of the dead horses, under heavy fire, and fetched the gun out of the danger zone.



*A sketch by Gilbert Holiday*



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

**TOURNAI**

The old fortified bridge where some of the most furious fighting took place



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

**MONS BELFRY**

The highest point of the place where the British Army first went into action, and a conspicuous landmark from which the Germans were able easily to get the range for artillery fire



THE BRITISH STAND AT MONS  
A phase of the fiercely contested battle, showing  
the complex nature of a modern action



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

**BRINGING DOWN THE GERMAN EAGLE**  
Battle in the air between French monoplane and German Taube

NO. 100  
CAMBRAI



Drawn by W. B. Wollen

BATTLE OF CAMBRAI—LE CATEAU  
The Gordons' last stand



Drawn by L. Sabattier

THE TURCOS CHARGING AT CHARLEROI

THE RETIREMENT  
FROM CHARLEROI



Drawn by Henri Lanos

**THE RETIREMENT FROM CHARLEROI**  
French and British side by side in one of  
the most dangerous phases of the great  
retreat



*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday*

**FACING THE FOE TO THE LAST**

The soldier who supplied the material for this sketch recounted how a wounded Highlander, whom he picked up and carried to the rear under heavy fire, kept potting at the enemy all the time, saying, "Another pill for the Germans," every time he pulled the trigger.



*Photo Topical*

**GENERAL SIR H. SMITH-DORRIEN**

"A commander of rare and unusual coolness, intrepidity, and determination"—Field-Marshal French's First Report, September 7, 1914



*Photo Topical*

**GENERAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG**

In command of the First Army Corps of the Expeditionary Force



*Photo Elliott & Fry*

**BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. DE B. DE LISLE**

Who first won fame in charge of a column during the South African campaign, and had charge of a brigade of cavalry during the great retreat to the position of the Marne



*Photo Topical*

**LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR DAVID HENDERSON**

In command of the Royal Flying Corps with the Expeditionary Force



*Photo Elliott & Fry*

**GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON**

To whom an important mission has been allotted  
in connection with defensive measures in England



*Photo G. & P.*

**MAJOR-GENERAL SIR PHILIP CHETWODE**

Commanding the 5th Cavalry Brigade in France



*Photo Topical*

**MAJOR-GENERAL EDMUND ALLENBY**

Commanding the cavalry of the Expeditionary Force  
on the great retreat



*Photo Swaine*

**MAJOR-GENERAL SIR A. MURRAY**

Chief of the General Staff of the Expeditionary Force

# THE MILITARY AUSTRALIANS



*Photo Topical*

#### GENERAL JOFFRE

The greatest modern French strategist, and in supreme command of the forces in France



*Photo Topical*

#### GENERAL PAU

One of France's brilliant cavalry leaders, and a veteran of 1870

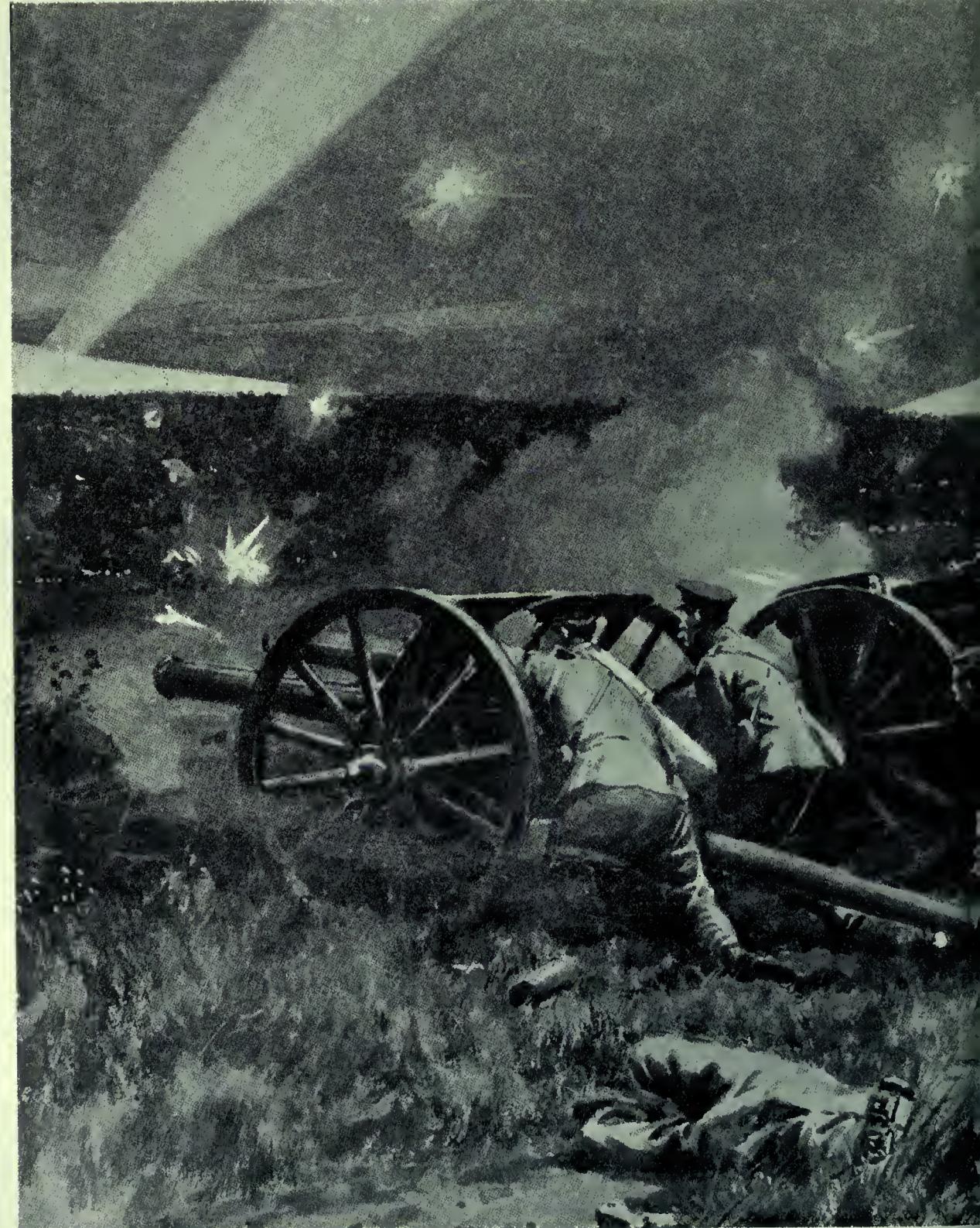


*Photo Topical*

#### GENERAL D'AMADE

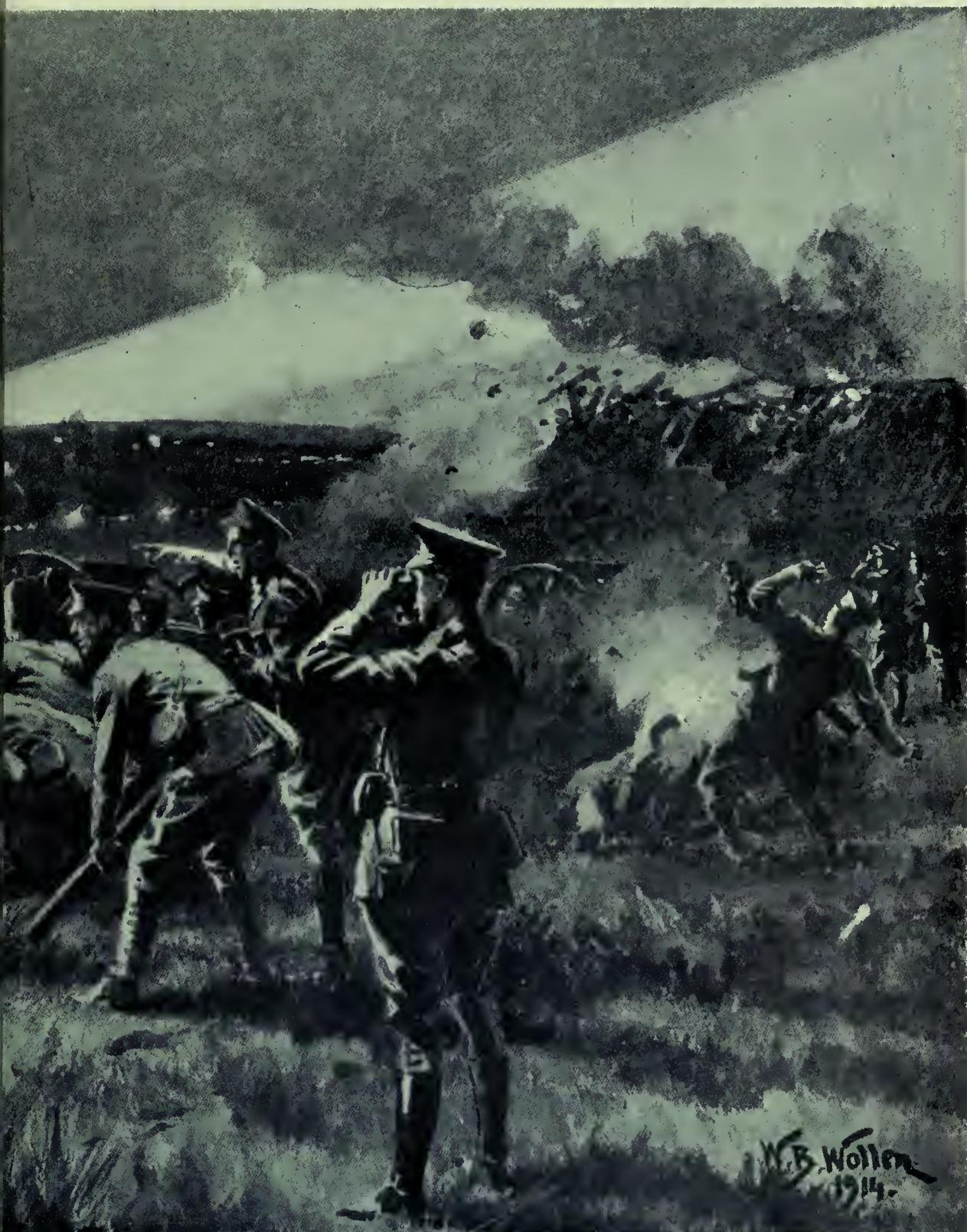
General Joffre's "right-hand man" during the retreat to the position of the Marne

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Drawn by W. B. Wollen

In the four days' battle which began on August 23 at Mous, and ended at the Cambrai-Le Cateau line on August 26, the British Army offered a superb resistance in the face of tremendous odds, and our losses, though amounting to 5,000 or 6,000 men, were trifling compared with the losses suffered by the enemy. The picture represents a night scene in the Arras region, where for hours our lines were swept by the enemy's searchlights, followed by great gusts of shrapnel



**THE BRITISH STAND AT MONS**

From sketches supplied by our soldiers who took part in the engagement



LIPPEN, 1914  
GALLERIE



*Photo Topical*

**CROWN PRINCE OF GERMANY**

Who has proved less able to command an army corps  
than to pillage French chateaux



*Photo E. N. A.*

**PRINCE RUPERT OF BAVARIA**

A staunch supporter of the "blood and iron" policy



*Photo Record Press*

**COUNT VON MOLTKE**

Successor to the great von Moltke of the war of 1870



*Photo Record Press*

**GENERAL VON KLUCK**

Germany's most able leader in the French area of war



*Photo Record Press*

**PRINCE VON BÜLOW**

Diplomat and soldier

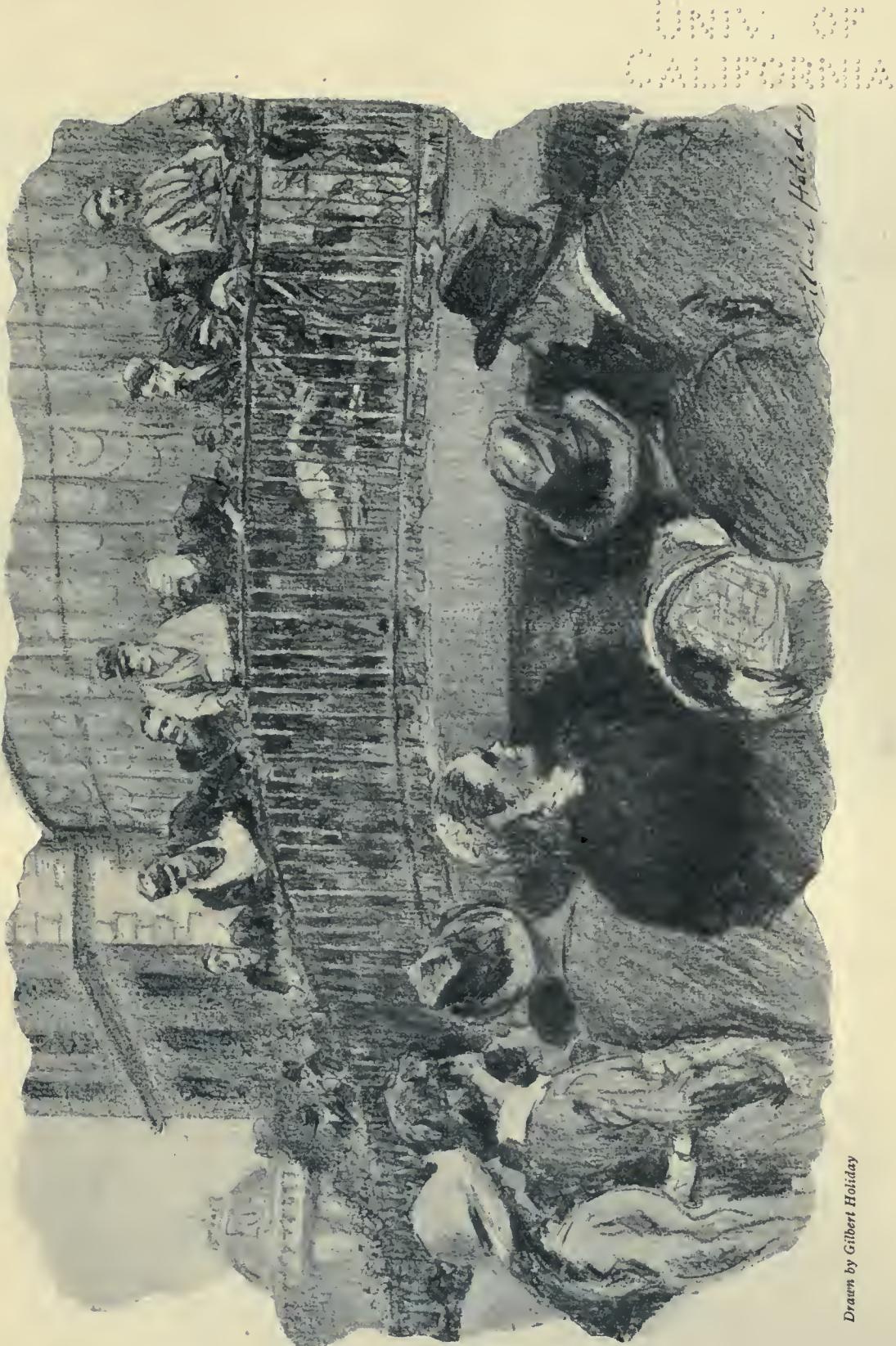


*Photo Record Press*

**GENERAL VON HANSEN**

To whom was entrusted the command of one of the German armies in France

**ON THE FRONT  
AT DINARO.**  
Wounded  
soldiers chatting  
with the crowd  
from the balcony  
of a fashionable  
hotel



Drawn by Gilbert Holiday



A sketch by Richard Cooper

**LIKE A FLOCK OF CROWS**

German Uhlans and infantry swarming into Orchies  
during the retreat of the Allies



*From a sketch on the spot by Richard Cooper*

#### THE GERMANS AT ORCHIES

A narrow escape for non-combatants, many of whom were shot on the mere suspicion of being spies

*The War*  
*Illustrated*



*Drawn by Henry Lanos*

226

**AFTER THE BATTLE**  
The roll-call

UPPER OP  
CALIFORNIA



*From a sketch on the spot by Richard Cooper*

WATCHING THE ONCOMING GERMANS FROM  
A COIGN OF VANTAGE AT ORCHIES

THE EXODUS  
FROM PARIS



*A sketch by Henri Lanos*

**THE EXODUS FROM PARIS**

Scene at the gates of one of the great railway-stations  
just before the removal of the seat of government to  
Bordeaux



Drawn by Ralph Cleaver from a sketch by Louis Tallet

REFUGEES LEAVING PARIS BY THE LAST  
TRAIN FROM THE GARE DU NORD

From the moment that the French Government decided to move to Bordeaux the exodus from Paris began, and many thousands left the capital for the south coast and for England. The great bulk of the Parisians, however, remained in the capital facing the future with calm confidence

THE TURN OF THE  
TIDE: FRENCH PUR-  
SUING GERMANS' AT  
MEAUX

230



Drawn by Ernest Prater



*Facsimile of a sketch by A. Van Anrooy  
from a French private's description*

## BATTLE OF MEAUX

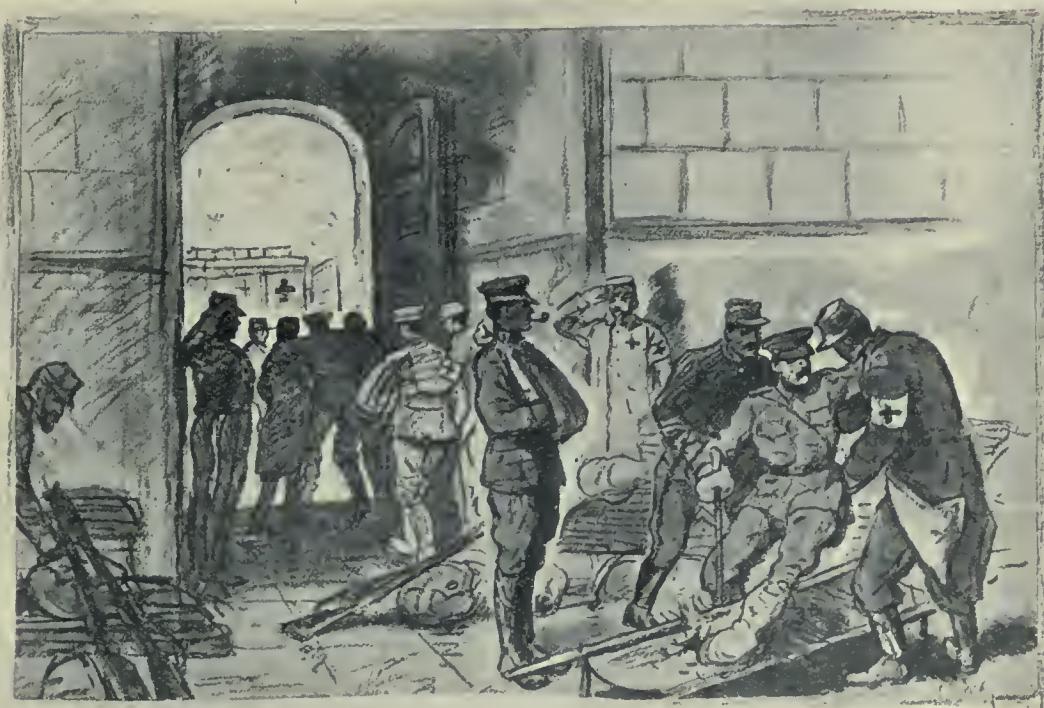
Taxicabs removing wounded at "the turn of the tide," 20 miles from Paris, when swarms of motor vehicles were requisitioned for various military uses



*From a sketch by an artist at the front, roughly finished by Gilbert Holiday*

**ON THE FRONTIER**  
The advanced guard of the forces that entered Alsace, carried Altkirch, and occupied Mulhouse, previous to the French retreat on the frontier defences in the east

UNION OF  
CALIFORNIA





Drawn by Gilbert Holiday

234

A WOUNDED BRITISH OFFICER IN FRANCE



*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday*

**TREES AS BARRICADES**

A scene at the Porte de Versailles, Paris, during the time when all fortifications were strengthened in anticipation of a siege by the German armies



*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday*

**BATTLING IN THE BLUE**  
An aeroplane action over Paris



Drawn by *Gilbert Holiday*

**BOLTS FROM THE BLUE**  
Parisians collecting fragments  
of a bomb dropped by a Taube

**ON THE MEUSE**

The bridge of Sassy, a village near the Meuse where it flows through the great plain of Longwy  
The field of Sedan. The railway to Metz crosses the Meuse in the middle distance

*Drawn by Donald Maxwell*





Drawn by Donald Maxwell

MÉZIÈRES, THE CHIEFTOWN IN THE DEPARTMENT  
OF THE ARDENNES, AND A GREAT TRAINING  
CENTRE FOR THE FRENCH ARMY



Drawn by Donald Maxwell

VERDUN, PORT CHÂTEL

The fortifications round Verdun form a ring of nearly twenty miles diameter, and the fortress is regarded as one of the strongest in France



Drawn by *Gilbert Holiday*

240

THE RUINED RAILWAY AND TELEGRAPH WIRES AT CRÉPY



*Drawn by Gilbert Holiday*

HOW THE FRENCH CROSSED A RUINED BRIDGE  
SPANNING THE RIVER NONETTE AT CHANTILLY



**THE FRENCH 75-MM. GUN  
IN ACTION**  
The 75-millimetre gun of the French artillery corresponds roughly with the British 2½-pounder field-gun, and is the most powerful weapon of its size in use on the continent

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Drawn by Georges Scott

A LETTER FROM THE FIRING LINE

All letters are read by the military censors before being despatched, and any passages referring to military movements are excised

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